FOLLOWERS OF THE MARKED TRAIL

NANNIE LEE FRAYSER

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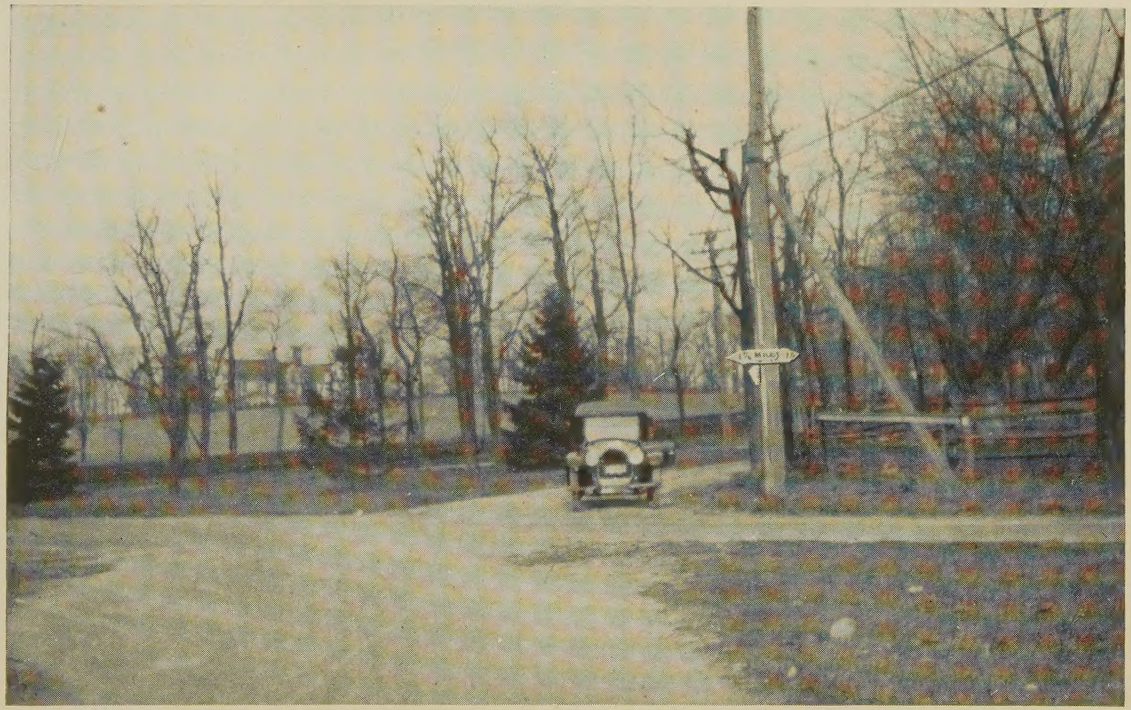

A MARKED TRAIL

The Abingdon Religious Education Texts
David G. Downey, General Editor
WEEK-DAY SCHOOL SERIES GEORGE HERBERT BETTS, Editor

Followers of the Marked Trail

BY

NANNIE LEE FRAYSER

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UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OCT 1 1956

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CHAPTER I

TRAIL MAKERS

"The Lincoln Highway, which connects New York City with San Francisco," said Jack.

"The Dixie Highway, which goes from Chicago to sunny Florida," responded Virginia.

"The Mohawk Trail, which takes you through the most beautiful sections of New England," called out Helen.

"The Adirondack Trail, that gives you a trip through the wonderful mountains," said Henry.

Father was referee and the children were playing a favorite twilight game. Jack and Virginia were trying to down Helen and Henry, and they made it lively for father. The object was to name the largest number of important highways —the Marked Trails over which thousands of automobiles spin along on their errands of business or pleasure, and to give an idea of the sections of country through which they are built.

Excitement grew as the game progressed, and a score of answers were given correctly, but after Virginia and Jack had challenged with "Yellowstone Trail" and "Great White Way," Helen and Henry had to give up, and Virginia's side was declared victor.

"I can play a game almost as interesting as

that one in my imagination," said father. "I like to go back to the days when there were none of these splendid highways, when there were not even well-traveled roads, when there were no signs along the way or at the corners to tell the traveler which way to turn. I like to remember the days of the pioneers and picture to myself how it must have looked in those days."

"I know something about it, father," said Jack, "because we've learned it in our history class at school. Years ago there were no white people in most of the Western part of our country, but there were Indians there. When the white people first went westward they drove covered wagons, in which the women and little children rode, and the men rode on horses, and some of them even walked. There were no roads at all, but sometimes the pioneers found trails which the Indians had made, and when there were not even trails, they had to pick their way as best they could."

"You are quite right, Jack, they did have to do a great many difficult things as they opened the new country, and perhaps that is one reason that they were so careful to think about the people who might some day come after them, for they often marked the trails over which they were passing, so that the travelers who might chance to come along that way should find it less difficult than it had been for them."

"What kind of marks did they make, father?" asked Helen.

"O I know! Let me tell her, father," begged Henry.

"All right, son, you may tell us all," said father.

"I have a storybook that tells all about it," said Henry. "That's the way I happen to know. Sometimes they would blaze a tree so the followers would see the sign, sometimes they would break off branches or twigs. At other places they would pile up a mound of stones or sod, and often they would drive stakes in the ground. The followers were on the lookout for traveling signs, and it is wonderful how they understood them."

"Were all these trails and signs the beginning of our roads?" asked Virginia.

"Not all of them," answered father, "but as time went on some of them did become the very highways over which the automobiles go to-day. More and more people traveled over them. Trails grew into paths, paths into roads, the roads were broadened and improved, great companies of men worked with one another to make the problem of getting from place to place easier, and now we have our great highway system with its colored bands and numbers and signboards, and it is only the careless or ignorant driver who loses his way on the best highways."

"Then there are the guidebooks, father; I think they are a wonderful help, don't you? I thought one of the finest things about our tour last summer was sitting on the front seat by you and

hunting out all the things in the guidebook ahead of time so we did not run the risk of going wrong."

"That makes me want to get into the conversation," said mother, " for Jack has made me think of the greatest Guidebook in all the world, in which the bravest men have put down rules and signs to keep others from going wrong. It was given to us by the great Guide, who wants us all to keep in the right path. In this Guidebook there are stories of pioneers who braved hardships in order to open the paths for others, there are accounts of adventures more thrilling than I have ever read in any other adventure book, there is the life story of the one Trail Maker who never went wrong, and who came to the earth just to make a plain path for those who should come after him."

"Well, I know exactly what book you mean, mother, and who the great Guide was," said Jack, "but it is the first time I ever thought of Jesus as a Pioneer or a Trail Maker, but I like to think of him that way."

"But I wanted to tell you," went on mother, "that a class is to be formed this week for the boys and girls who want to know more about the makers of history who were sent by God to open the way in the beginning, and Miss Crawford was here this afternoon to find out how many of this family will join for Wednesday and Friday afternoons during the school term."

"Let us take the count," said father. "I'll call the roll for the Johnson family, and all who care to learn more of the history in the Bible may answer 'Aye.'"

"Jack answer first, as he is the oldest."

"Aye," voted Jack.

"Virginia next."

"Aye," answered Virginia.

"Henry Johnson."

"Aye," almost shouted Henry.

"Helen, do you think you are old enough to join?" asked mother.

"If I can play the game of Trail Makers, I think I can study the lessons," Helen urged.

"That makes it unanimous," said father.

So it was arranged that the children should join the class to study about Trail Makers of other times. Perhaps you will meet them there.

STUDY TOPICS

1. What automobile trails or highways besides those mentioned in the lesson can you name? What famous trails made by the early explorers or the pioneer settlers?
2. Explain what is meant by trail makers who show us the way to live. Physicians and scientists have marked out the trail by which we can avoid sickness and so keep well and strong. To avoid colds, they put up the signs, "Open windows while you sleep," "Exercise in the open air," etc.

Can you give still other signboards directing the way to health?

3. What trail makers from American history do you most admire? For what great service was each famous? that is, what "trail" did he open for us to follow?
4. How many trail makers from the Bible can you name? Tell why we may think of the Bible as a great guidebook which we are to follow.
5. Write in your note book the names of three Americans whom you consider worthy of a place among the trail makers of history. Write your reasons for choosing each one. Can you add the names of three trail makers of Bible history?

CHAPTER II

THE GREAT PIONEER OF THE MARKED TRAIL

THE camel-drivers were loading the animals for a long journey, and there was a great deal of excitement among the men as they worked.

"I wonder what has come over our master," said Shelah, one of the camel-drivers. "Without any warning he gave the order to move, and he has not even told us in what direction we are to go. As for the end of the journey, he has made no mention of what that shall be."

"Our master gives orders just as you say, Shelah," answered Eber, the head of the drovers, "but it is for you and me to obey his commands whatever they may be, and ask no questions. See that the camels upon which the master and his household are to ride are in good condition, and prepare those which are to carry the burdens for a long journey. Then we will be secure, for if our master should be going only a short distance, nothing would go amiss, and if the journey is to be a long one, we will be able to travel in the right way"; and Eber turned to give directions to the men who were rolling the tents together.

"But do you think it is our duty to follow

blindly where he leads, taking our wives and little ones with us?" urged Shelah. "Have we not a right to know the reason for this sudden journey?"

"As for me, I have never had cause to doubt our master's kindness and wisdom," replied Eber, "and if he does not explain, he has reasons within himself for his silence. Since he is to lead the company himself, I have no fear that anything will harm the mothers and the children. I shall follow without question." And Eber turned again toward the men who were tying great ropes around the bundles of rugs which were to be loaded upon the camels.

"See that the camels have plenty of water before we start," Eber called to the men who were making ready the provisions for the journey. "Since we do not know the way our master may decide to go, we cannot be sure that we will come upon the wells very soon, and the animals must not suffer from thirst."

"I cannot understand why our master should care to leave this place where we are in the midst of plenty, and where his family is honored, and he himself is regarded as a chief man," grumbled one of the women as she gathered her belongings together. "Some strange influence must be working upon him that he should decide so suddenly to leave a land so well-favored as this."

"It is the way of the world," answered another who was tying sandals upon the feet of her chil-

dren. "If it is the master who gives the word, we must follow and ask no questions."

"I am not so meek as you," said the other. "I do not propose to go one step unless I am told all about—" But she suddenly stopped her threatening speech, for looking up from her bundle, she saw the master's trusted nephew standing near, and she feared that her idle words would get her into trouble with the master. She listened quietly enough when Lot began to speak.

"My uncle sends word," said he, speaking to Eber, the head of the drovers, "that we shall not return again to this place, nor even to this land. He goes to a far country of which he himself knows nothing, but he bids me say that he has no fears for our safety on the journey. He has received a message which assures him that all will be well, and he knows the message can be trusted. Moreover, he has received a command which he dares not disobey, even though he himself is a leader and the head of this great company. See that there are provisions enough for a long journey, and take into account that there may be delays along the way. Let no woman or child be left behind. Fill all the skins with water, and see that the tents are in good condition. We are to start with to-morrow's dawn."

Lot went back to the master's tent and the word was passed along among the herdsmen, fighting men, servants, women, and children, until the whole two thousand which made up the house-

hold had been notified of the plan to start out on the journey to a far country in the early morning of the next day.

"We will have a great adventure," thought the boys, and they even hoped that they would come upon wild beasts in the wilderness, for then they might have a chance to show how brave they really were, and how they could protect their younger brothers and sisters.

At dawn the next morning everything was in readiness, and the whole company waited the signal to set forth into the untried country.

At the head of the company rode the great leader. He had a look of confidence in his eyes and he sat upon his camel with such majesty that the people were proud to be following in his train. From time to time he lifted his face toward the heavens and his lips moved, but those who rode near him heard no words that he said.

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

These words were ringing in his ears as he rode so confidently at the head of the company. This was the message in which he trusted, and this was the command which he dared not disobey. God had spoken to him, calling him out of the land in

which he was living, to make him a blessing to all the families of the earth that should come after him. So Abraham started out at the command of God to open the Marked Trail as a pioneer chosen by the Lord.

At the first stop in the journey, before they pitched their tents or ate any food, Abraham and Lot worked together building a rude altar. But it made no difference that it was just built up of the materials they could find at hand. God knew the spirit in which the altar was built, and it pleased him that Abraham should do this thing. The reason God had called Abraham to leave his native land to travel into an unknown country was that the people in Abraham's native land were beginning to worship idols, and Abraham was chosen to prove whether he would be true to God in a new land.

When Eber saw what Abraham was doing he said to Shelah: "I know only too well that our master would rather give up all his camels and his silks and gold and silver than to give up his worship of the true and living God. I wonder, Shelah, if that is not the reason that our master has left the good land from which we came?"

Shelah bowed his head; he was ashamed that he had questioned Abraham's wisdom that day among the camel-drivers. "If that is the reason, Eber," he replied, "it is well for our children that we have such a leader as our master. We would not have our children grow up to be worshipers

of idols. I shall follow our master wherever he leads."

When the altar was finished, Abraham kneeled before it in the presence of the entire company and lifted his voice to God in thankful prayer. No other sound was heard save the voice of the leader opening the Trail with prayer to God. The people stood with bowed heads, and the children kneeled by their mothers.

They rested here a few days, for Abraham was a wise leader and was merciful to his faithful animals as well as to his people. At last they came to the beautiful land of Canaan. Here they pitched their tents near a great oak tree that became famous in history because Abraham lodged here. He set up another altar here for the worship of God, and one day God said to him, "All this land will I give to you and to your children after you."

This was a second sign-post in the Trail, and the place was named Shechem. They stayed here until they were rested and refreshed after the long journey, and until even the weakest one was ready to go on with the caravan.

But one evening the order came to take up the journey the next day. The third stop was at Bethel, another well-known place in the history of the Trail, and here again Abraham set up an altar for the worship of God, and it became a marker to travelers.

Often at night as he walked out alone and

looked up at the stars Abraham said over and over in his heart the words of the message and the command which had started him out on the untried Trail:

"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Study Topics

1. Read the story of the beginning of Abraham's journey.
2. Write a description of the caravan as it traveled on its way.
3. Locate on the map the country where Abraham first lived. The places mentioned in the lesson.
4. Find a picture of an altar like the one Abraham and Lot built.
5. Over one hundred years ago there lived in Scotland a boy who became one of the greatest pioneers of all history. He, like Abraham, left his native land when he became a man, and went to a country which was new and strange to him, in obedience to the voice of God. He went to a people who knew nothing about God to carry the message of the gospel. He suffered many

hardships, but he became a discoverer and a great pioneer missionary. He went into the very heart of Africa, and lived among the natives, who learned to love and trust him.

He spent many years in that strange land and his heart is buried far away in Africa to-day, although his body was brought to Westminster Abbey to be placed by those who have done great deeds for the good of mankind.

A poem was written to his memory after his death, and if you can supply the missing word in the last line of this poem you will know the name of the great pioneer.

"He needs no epitaph to guard a name
Which men shall prize while worthy work is known;
He lived and died for good—be that his fame;
Let marble crumble: this is--------."

CHAPTER III

WHERE THE ROADS FORKED

"THERE is not room enough for thy cattle and mine on this land. I got to this pasture first, and I must give account to my master for the condition of his animals. He will make thee pay dearly for thy trespassing when it comes to his ears that thy cattle have been brought to this feeding-ground!" and Jared beat upon the ground with his herding rod as he tried to drive Kenan off the land.

"I will not move one step," retorted Kenan, "for I searched all night long for a good place for my cattle, and when I came there were no cattle here. Because thy cattle fed here yesterday is no reason that the feeding ground belongs to thee. My master will hold me accountable for the condition of his animals, as well as thine, and I will not move from this place!" and Kenan's voice rose angrily as he spoke.

"We shall see who has a right to this land!" cried Jared. "If my master, Abraham, is head of this tribe he shall settle whose animals shall feed in the good places; and since I am his chief herdman it will not take him long to decide whose cattle shall move to another place."

"Go to thy master, thou talebearer!" mocked Kenan, "and little good will it do thee if I can read his mind aright; for my master, Lot, will stand up for me, and even Abraham himself will not go against Lot, for he is as a son in Abraham's sight. Go to the tent of Abraham and see what is to be gained thereby."

Thus did the herdmen of Abraham and Lot quarrel over the feeding-grounds for the cattle. It came to be a daily occurrence until at last news of the quarreling came to the ears of the leader. When Abraham knew the cause for the quarreling among the herdmen he sent for Lot to come to his tent.

"There are things I would say to thee, Lot, which are meant only for thy ears. Come with me to the hilltop yonder that we may talk undisturbed."

So they went to the top of the hill where they could look out over the whole land, and Abraham said: "There must never be a quarrel between me and thee, Lot, nor between thy herdmen and mine. There is no longer room enough for the flocks and herds of both of us to feed in this region. Our animals have increased until the land is not able to bear them all. The whole land lies before us here. You choose the portion which you desire, and I will take what is left. Then there will be peace in our borders, and all will be well."

Lot must have been filled with amazement.

Although Abraham had been as kind to him as if he had been his own son and had given him the first cattle from which his great herd had grown, nevertheless Abraham was the leader and had a right to the whole land, and could have commanded Lot's herdmen to leave the land entirely; and here he was offering to give Lot the first choice of the land. No wonder Lot was amazed.

As they looked over the land they saw in one place a great plain, watered by the Jordan River, so fertile that any cattle feeding upon it would grow more sleek and valuable each day. This land was as beautiful as a Garden of Eden and of priceless value to a master herder.

Lot turned to Abraham and swept his hand over the direction of the fertile Jordan valley and said, "I will take the plain through which the Jordan flows."

Beyond the fertile plain were the rocks and hills of Canaan, where the cattle would find pasture with great difficulty. This was all that would be left to Abraham if he stood by his bargain. Surely, the leader of the great company would not consider moving off to that poor place among the hills and giving the younger man the whole pleasant valley! But Abraham's followers had not trusted him in vain when they set out to follow him into the unknown land. He was a man of his word; he had meant what he said when he told Lot, "Is not the whole land before thee?

if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right, then I will go to the left."

So they separated themselves from one another. Abraham went off to live among the hills of Canaan, and Lot took the plain. But Lot moved his family into the city, while his flocks and herds were left in the valley pastures under the care of his herdmen. The city to which Lot moved with his family, was called Sodom, and before Lot had been there very long he discovered that it was a wicked city, where the people laughed at the laws of God. He was sorry about this, but he did not think of moving away, for he was a very rich man. He soon became well known in the city of Sodom, and the people of the town looked up to him. But he had made a detour in the Trail, and separated himself from the leader.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Tell the story of Abraham and Lot dividing the pasture land between them.
2. Describe the way the people of Abraham's company secured their living. What did they have to eat? In what kind of dwellings did they live?
3. Which do you think you would rather have for a neighbor, Abraham or Lot? Why?
4. Explain what is meant in the lesson by saying that Lot "had made a detour in the Trail."

5. Read the Bible story of the incident of this lesson as told in Gen. 13. 1-12.
6. Write in your notebook your reasons for preferring either Abraham or Lot as your neighbor.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE MARKED TRAIL TO THE DETOUR

The tents of the herders were pitched at the outer edge of the camp, and among the rocks and rugged hills the cattle were feeding as best they could. The tent of the leader of the tribe was pitched near a great oak tree, and close by were the tents in which the members of his household lived. In plain view of all, on a little hill, was a pile of stones, which showed that the company gathered there worshiped the Lord God. This altar had been built by Abraham as soon as he took up his new land among the hills of Canaan.

Abraham was walking alone on the crest of one of the ranges of hills. He may have been thinking about Lot and wondering how this nephew, for whom he had done so many kind services, could have forgotten all about the past and taken advantage of his kindness as he had done in choosing the Jordan valley for his flocks; or he may have been wondering why Lot had never come to see him, or sent any messengers to inquire of his welfare, since that day when their paths had separated. Abraham must have been feeling sad and disappointed.

As he walked back and forth upon the hill Abraham heard a voice calling him. How glad he was to stop and listen, for it was the voice that he loved to hear. God was speaking to Abraham and giving him hope and cheer. God's voice said:

"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed, forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth.... Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it."

Abraham's heart was filled with peace and joy. He knew that he had pleased God in giving up the Jordan valley, and this was worth all the rich pasture lands in the world to Abraham. But he looked out in the directions which God had commanded, and he was filled with wonder at what God's promise to him meant.

On the east was a range of hills and beyond them was a great mountain; between the hills and the mountain was a deep, fertile valley; to the south and west were low hills, and to the north were broad, watered plains bordered by hills like walls for protection from enemies. God, the owner of all this land, had told Abraham to go out and survey it, and that some day it would all belong to him.

Abraham could not understand how this would

ever be brought about, but he trusted God as the One whose promises never fail, and he knew God would bring it to pass in his own good way.

So Abraham went out and surveyed the land, and then he moved his tents to the land of Hebron and set up the family tents under the famous oaks of Mamre.

As soon as he set up the new home, Abraham built an altar under one of the oaktrees, where the worship of God was established.

He soon made friends of the people who lived in the surrounding country, and his cattle had rich pasturage at last. Here he lived in peace and plenty with his family around him, and the blessing of God rested upon his household.

But one day as he sat in front of his tent, looking out over his fertile lands and watching his cattle peacefully browsing, he discovered a man in the distance running toward his tent. As he drew nearer Abraham saw that his clothes were torn and his hands were scratched and bleeding. Abraham rose and hastened toward him and led him to his tent. The man had a strange story to tell.

"There has been a great battle," he said, "in which the king of Sodom has been defeated by a trick. The soldiers went out following the king to the war, and they went into the forest to attack the enemy. But the forest was full of slime pits, of which the king and his soldiers had no knowledge, for the enemy had covered the pit-

falls with underbrush. So the soldiers fell into the slime pits and were captured by the enemy and the king himself was taken captive. Then the enemy pursued into the very city of Sodom, and the message that I bring for you is that Lot and all of his family have been carried away into the land of the enemy!" and the stranger sank exhausted at the feet of Abraham, for it had taken all his strength to run the long distance with this news.

Abraham waited to hear no more. Lot was his nephew and he was in danger. Abraham forgot all about Lot's choice of the rich Jordan valley. He needed help, and Abraham had it to offer. He had three hundred and eighteen fighting men in his company, and they were strong and fearless and ready to move at a moment's notice. In a short time he was riding at the head of his little army on his way to rescue Lot from the hands of the enemy.

It was night when they drew near the city in which Lot was held captive, and this suited Abraham exactly. He planned a surprise attack that would be as effective if it worked as the trick of the enemy among the slime pits of the forest near Sodom.

He divided the men into different bands, putting them at such places around the walls of the city as would make every stroke count for victory, for he had the enemy walled in, and they could not attack in all these directions at once.

When Abraham gave the signal to attack and the men all charged at once, the enemy saw with alarm that they were attacked on all sides at the same moment and they thought a great army was surrounding their city. They began to flee through the one way that was open to them, and Abraham's soldiers started in hot pursuit, but the enemy continued to flee and the city was deserted save for the captives who were imprisoned there.

Then Abraham entered the city and searched until he found Lot and every member of his family. He first set them free and then he released all the other captives.

In the meantime some of the soldiers of the king of Sodom who had been left by the enemy to die in the slime pits had succeeded in struggling out, and hunting through the forest for their comrades who might still be alive, they came upon the king himself, ready to die with exhaustion. They rescued him and brought him back to the city, but they found it pillaged and deserted. Then the king knew that all of his subjects had been carried away captive and he had not enough fighting men to try to rescue them.

One day one of his faithful soldiers came running to him with the news that a strange-looking company was approaching the city. The king came out to see, and there he beheld a sight that filled his heart with rejoicing. There were all his subjects, footsore and weary, it is true, but alive and well, and at the head of the company

rode their rescuer, Abraham, with Lot by his side. Moreover, they were bringing back all the booty which the enemy had seized when they entered Sodom.

The king bowed low before Abraham to do him honor, and said: "I am so grateful for the return of my people, that I will not take the booty. Let me beg that it shall be yours in return for all your kindness."

But Abraham answered: "I will not touch even a thread or a shoe latchet as reward for my services. I went not to the battle for riches or for rewards. I went out to the help of the helpless, and to the rescue of those whom I loved. I have brought them back safe and I am satisfied."

So Abraham and his soldiers returned to the land of Hebron, to their tents and their flocks, and Abraham went first to the altar where he thanked God for the victory; then he returned to his own tent under the oaks of Mamre.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Read the Bible story of the attack on Sodom and Abraham's rescue of Lot found in Gen. 18. 20-33; 19. 1-29.
2. Tell how God rewarded Abraham for having been unselfish in allowing Lot to have the best of the land.
3. Tell the plan by which Abraham won in his attack on the enemy.
4. What do you think about Abraham's re-

fusal to accept the spoils taken from the enemy?

5. Some things which Abraham saw and which we may see now (commit to memory):

"The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language;
Their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun."

6. A prayer for each one of us:

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my rock, and my redeemer."

7. Study this prayer verse until you can write it perfectly in your notebook. Then try to write a prayer in your own words that means the same desire as that in the words of the psalmist.

CHAPTER V

A PROMISE AND A WARNING

ABRAHAM sat in the door of his tent under the oaks of Mamre, as he did on the day that he received the news which took him forth to battle to rescue Lot from the enemy who had carried him away captive. It was noonday and the sun was burning hot, but Abraham was thinking as steadily as he did when he walked up and down under the quiet stars at night. He was communing with God, and Abraham needed no special time nor particular place to think about his affairs before God, for he was called the "Friend of God," and that he truly was.

Perhaps Abraham was thinking that day of a promise which God had made to him and wondering when it would ever come true. This was the promise, that some day there should be a son born in his household who should be the comfort and joy of his heart and who should carry the family name on through generation after generation. He had waited a long time for the promise to be fulfilled, but he knew it would come to pass in time, for God had made the promise, and Abraham had never known God's promises to fail.

Perhaps he was thinking about his nephew, Lot, over in the city of Sodom, to which he had carried him safely after the great adventure of rescuing him from the enemy. Abraham had always been sorry that Lot had moved his family from the country, where the flocks and herds were, into the city of Sodom, for the wickedness in the city of Sodom was known throughout the whole country, and Abraham feared that Lot and his children would become like the people among whom they lived every day.

Abraham loved God, and the strongest desire of his heart was to serve God in the right way, and he longed for his family and kinsmen to serve God also. He was loyal and true as the friend of God.

Whatever he was thinking about on this bright, hot noonday, he was so lost in thought that he did not look up to notice anything.

Suddenly he became aware that three strangers were approaching his tent, and they were almost upon him before he could rise to greet them. He sprang to his feet and bowed low before them and with true hospitality invited them to stop and visit him.

"Pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread and comfort ye your heart," was the way he invited them to be his guests for the noonday meal.

So the three strangers came near and sat down under the shade of the wonderful oaks of Mamre, while Abraham went out to give directions for their entertainment.

He went to the tent where Sarah was and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it and make cakes." And Sarah at once set to work to carry out his wishes, for she was as hospitable as her husband. It was the very best meal she had in the tent, but that was the way she liked to show her guests that they were welcome.

Then Abraham went out to the herd and selected the tenderest meat he could find and gave orders that it should be prepared quickly for the unexpected guests.

The servant cooked the meat after his best fashion, and when it was ready to serve, poured milk and butter over it in abundance.

When the meal was ready the servants brought it out to the guests under the oak trees in the shade, and Abraham stood by as they ate, according to the courtesy of that land.

When the strangers had refreshed themselves with the savory food, one of them told Abraham the best news that had ever come to his ears since the day that he left Ur of the Chaldees to go out into a land he knew not of in obedience to the voice of God in his heart. The message was that at last the glad promise was to come true, and that before another year rolled around

a son should be born who should carry the family name down to generation after generation, and who should be the joy and comfort of his heart. At last the word of God to Abraham was to be fulfilled, when he had promised:

"Behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of a multitude of nations . . . . And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of their sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

Abraham's heart was filled with wonder and joy, for now he knew that he was entertaining heavenly visitors in his home and that the message was truly from God, but Abraham did not know how great one of his visitors really was. This was one of the happiest moments of Abraham's whole life.

When the glad message had been delivered, the heavenly visitors rose to leave, and they told Abraham that they were going in the direction of Sodom. Not forgetful of the hospitality of his country, Abraham, as their host, offered to go part of the way with them in order that they might be sure to take the right road.

When the time came for him to turn back, before he left his guests, one of them spoke to him thus, "Shall I hide from Abraham that which

I do? . . . For I have known him, . . . that he may command . . . his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord."

Suddenly Abraham realized that one of the heavenly visitors was God.

Then God told Abraham that he was sending the two angels who were with him on to Sodom and Gomorrah, to see for themselves if the great wickedness in the cities was true, and, moreover, God told him that if the cities were altogether wicked, they would have to be wiped out.

At this the two angels left and went on toward Sodom, but God remained with Abraham. How Abraham pleaded with God for the city of Sodom! Although Lot had not always done as Abraham might have wished him to do, nevertheless, he was his kinsman, and Abraham loved him dearly. So Abraham asked God if there were fifty righteous men to be found in the city if he would spare Sodom; and God said he would. Then Abraham began to be afraid that there might not be fifty righteous men in the whole big city, and he gradually came down in numbers until God had promised him if ten righteous men could be found there the cities would be spared.

Not once did Abraham mention Lot's name, but God knew what was in Abraham's heart, and he loved him all the more for being loyal to his nephew who had not been loyal to him at all times.

Then God vanished from Abraham's earthly sight, but the memory of the heavenly visit never vanished from Abraham's heart in the years to come.

Meanwhile the two angels went on their way to Sodom and Gomorrah, and there they found the wickedness so great that not even ten righteous men could be found among all the inhabitants. So the cities were to be wiped out of existence. But the angels went to Lot's door and warned him of what was coming to pass, and gave him the chance to escape with all his family.

Abraham went back to his tent after he had talked with God. But even though there was joy in his heart over the glad message which had come to his own home, he could not be happy while he thought of Lot down in the city of Sodom in such danger. He must have spent much of that night in prayer.

Early the next morning Abraham rose from his tent in Hebron and went out to look toward Sodom, over in the west. All he could see of what had been a great and wealthy city was a pile of smoldering ashes, from which smoke ascended.

But over in a little city in the foothills of the mountains, called Zoar, Lot and his daughters were safe and well, for, "God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

STUDY TOPICS

God still sends messengers of warning to his people as he sent the messengers to warn Lot. These messengers take many different forms and give us their messages in many different ways.

1. Perhaps as you start out to school in the morning you see flying at the top of a flagpole a little square, white flag. This flag says, "To-day the weather will be fair"; if the flag is blue, the message is, "General rain or snow"; if it is white with a black center, it says, "A cold wave is coming."

   These flags and several others are used by the Weather Bureau of the United States to give us forecasts of the weather so that we may arrange our plans. But before the Weather Bureau can make the forecast about what weather is coming, many observers from various parts of the country have read the warnings which God has sent in the clouds, the winds, and the temperature of the air.

2. Does God send us warnings about other things, as, for example, our *health?* Have you ever had a warning that a cold was coming on? That certain foods would make you ill? That your eyes were being injured? Are not such warnings part of God's plan? Did you obey the warnings?

3. God gives us warning through our conscience. When you have been tempted to do wrong have you felt something telling you not to do the wrong act? Have you ever felt your conscience accusing you and making you unhappy after you have done wrong?
4. Do you think God gives nations warning when they are becoming wicked and forgetting to follow the Trail? Can you think of any way in which God does warn nations?
5. A verse of Scripture to think over just now;

"For we are God's fellow workers; ye are God's husbandry, God's building" (1 Cor. 3. 9).

CHAPTER VI

A SUCCESSFUL SEARCH

The leader gave the command and the tired camels sank upon their knees near the well of water outside the city gates. It was evening at the hour when the women of that region, according to the custom, went out to draw water for the household. The leader of the caravan knew of this custom, and it was for this very reason that he had commanded the camels to kneel at that hour. The burdens on the camels' backs were beautiful silks, costly cloth and embroideries, and much silver and gold. Surely, the owner of this train was a rich and powerful man!

This was true indeed, for the owner of this caravan's wealth was none other than Abraham, the great Pioneer of the Trail. Abraham himself was not with this company, but had sent his trusted servant on this very important journey, carrying the rich treasure as a present to some one whom he had never seen.

As the camels kneeled by the well the driver of the caravan lifted his face to heaven and prayed a strange prayer. As he finished his prayer he looked toward the city and saw a beautiful company coming down to the well to draw water. These were the women of that place, who came

every evening to the well. One especially beautiful maiden came out from among the rest with her pitcher on her shoulder.

The stranger ran forward to meet her as she drew the pitcher dripping with the cool water from the well and cried, "Pray, give me some water to drink!"

At once she took the pitcher down from her shoulder and held it to his lips, and when he had quenched his thirst she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also, for they must be thirsty even as thou."

So she emptied the water that was left in her pitcher into the drinking trough and ran back to the well and refilled her pitcher and kept this up until the camels had all been watered.

The whole time she was doing this, the stranger was watching every movement she made, and when she had finished he came forward and bowed low to the ground and offered her a beautiful present which he had taken from the bundle on the back of one of the camels. This present was a golden ring, very heavy, and two wonderful bracelets.

Then he said, "Tell me, I pray thee, to what family dost thou belong, and if there is room in thy father's house for a stranger to spend the night as he pauses in his journey?"

"My father's name," she answered, "is Bethuel, and there is room and to spare for thee and for thy camels as well."

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REBEKAH AT THE WELL

When the stranger heard these words he lifted his eyes to the heavens and gave thanks to God. He said aloud, "The Lord in his goodness has led me to the very household that my master desired me to find."

The beautiful maiden ran home before him and told her mother all that had happened and showed the ring and the bracelets which the stranger had given her in return for watering his camels.

Then her brother Laban went out by the fountain of water to find the stranger and bid him welcome to their home. The stranger gladly returned with him, and when they had made the camels comfortable for the night they made ready for the evening meal.

When they were gathered at the table, the stranger said, "I will not eat until I have told who I am and why I am here."

"Tell us," they said. "We would like to hear all about it."

"I am a servant of a great man," he said, "the great and rich Abraham, the leader of his people and the friend of God. He has silver and gold, and flocks and herds, and manservants and maidservants. He has camels without number, and all the people in our land look up to him and obey his word. But he has only one son, even Isaac, whom he loves more than his own life. Because of the love that he feels for Isaac he would choose for him a wife from among this people, for these are people of his own kindred.

"Therefore he has sent me to choose out from among the people one who is beautiful and kind, to be the wife of his beloved son, Isaac. When he sent me forth upon this errand I was afraid, lest if I should find one beautiful enough she would refuse to return with me to my master's house. But my master is a man of faith and he said to me, 'The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way,' and I was no longer afraid but came at his bidding. As I waited by the fountain this evening I prayed to the Lord God, saying:

" 'O Lord the God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: behold, I stand by the fountain of water; and let it come to pass, that the maiden which cometh forth to draw, to whom I shall say, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; and she shall say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw water for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the Lord hath appointed for my master's son.'

"Almost before I had finished my prayer, this beautiful maiden came down to the fountain and I asked her for a drink. She gave it to me at once and then said she would water the camels as well. When I asked her to what family she belonged behold she told me it was the very family which my master, Abraham, had chosen as the one from which he desired the wife of his son to come.

Then, indeed, did I know that the Lord God had prospered my way and had sent his angel before my face to help me in my search. And now I beg to know what the answer shall be—will the beautiful maiden return with me to my master's house to make his heart glad for his son Isaac's sake?"

And they made answer: "Let the maiden speak for herself. This matter is ordered of the Lord God, and we will not stand in the way of it coming to pass as he wills."

Then the servant brought out all the rich presents which Abraham had sent, presents for the maiden and for her mother, and spread them before the family, and their hearts were touched that Abraham should have desired so much to win their good will.

The beautiful maiden said she would go, and although she was the sunshine of their home they said no word to keep her from going with Abraham's servant, but gave her rich clothing and maidservants of her own to go along with her.

So the next morning early the caravan started back to the home of Abraham, and the beautiful maiden rode by the side of her old nurse, who had cared for her when she was a child, and who went with her to her new home.

Late in the evening Isaac was out in the field alone thinking. He had been lonely since his mother had died, and he may have been feeling sad and lonely then. Suddenly he saw the car-

avan returning, and as he looked, a maiden got down from her camel and walked toward him with her veil over her face. Isaac went quickly forth to meet her and held out his hands to her and she came to the tent with him.

He took her to the tent in which his mother had lived and the beautiful maiden came in and made her home there.

Thus did Rebekah come to be the wife of Isaac, and she comforted him for his mother's death, and brought sunshine and joy to Abraham and Isaac.

STUDY TOPICS

1. What teaching of Jesus, given many years later, was Rebekah following in her kindness to the stranger at the well?
2. Prepare to tell the story of the lesson in your own words.
3. The Bible account of this incident is found in Gen. 24. 1-67.
4. Describe the kind of home in which Rebekah lived. Find, if possible, a picture of a caravan such as that which carried Rebekah to her new home. (Read Crosby, Geography of Bible Lands, Chapter 24.)
5. Imagine yourself either Rebekah or Isaac or the faithful messenger in this story. Write what you would have done that day.

CHAPTER VII

A STRANGE BARGAIN

JACOB sat by the gate and waited for Esau to come in from the hunt. Near him was a fire which he had built of wood gathered from the ground, and over the fire a pot of soup was simmering. He had been waiting patiently for a long time, for Esau was later than usual coming home that day. Jacob wanted to drive a bargain with Esau, his brother, when he did come, and it was for this reason that he had cooked the soup out of doors. He wanted to catch Esau before he got to the house, for he intended that the bargain should be a secret between them. Esau was entitled to something which Jacob had wanted ever since he had been old enough to know what it was worth, but this was the first time he had dared to plan to get it. For years he had been studying Esau's habits and tastes, to find out how to get on the weak side of him in order to get the thing he wanted from him, and he had found the way at last.

Esau was rough and ready, and liked to hunt in the fields and woods, bringing home fine game at the end of his day's sport. He never cared to stay around the house, and was not much of a help to his mother, but his father was always delighted

with the fine venison which Esau brought in from the hunt for him, and Esau was his favorite son.

Jacob had learned while they were growing up together that Esau was hot-tempered and impulsive, and that he spoke before he stopped to think and that he acted quickly, and was often sorry for it afterward. He liked good things to eat and was ready to trade things for food which pleased him.

Jacob kept all these things in his mind, for some day he meant to try Esau to find out if he could trade him out of the thing which he so earnestly desired.

Esau was the elder son, and for this reason he was entitled to the larger share of his father's wealth, to his father's special blessing, and to the right to become the head of the family at his father's death, which was equal to being the priest of the household.

There was one of these privileges which Jacob coveted so much that he longed to have it even if his brother had to give it up. This was the right to be the head of the family. He really thought he was better fitted for this position of trust than his brother was, for he had studied the family history and he kept up with the family customs and he loved form and ceremony, while his brother liked to hunt and to fish, and to stay out of doors most of the time. Jacob had succeeded in persuading himself that the family dignity and honor would suffer if his brother became

the priest of the household. Then, too, he thought his brother did not really care so much about it and that he would not grieve very much if he had to give it up. But Jacob was afraid to come right out and ask his brother to enter into a scheme to try to deceive their father and change the family blessing to his own head. So he had thought out this plan for getting the birthright from his brother, and he sat by the road waiting for him to come home from the hunt. He knew Esau would be hungry and tired, and he also knew how eager he was about good food; so from time to time he stirred the soup and left the top off the pot so the delicious smell of the soup might be wafted through the air. This would be sure to tempt Esau, and it would be easier to trade with him.

After so long a time he saw Esau coming, and the very thing happened for which he had planned so carefully. Esau smelled the soup, and as soon as he came within hearing he called out to Jacob, "Give me some of that fine soup, I pray you, for I am faint with hunger."

And Jacob answered: "I will not give it to you, but I will trade it for something you have. Exchange your birthright for this soup, and I will add bread for you to eat with it."

"Well, I am hungry enough to die, anyhow," said Esau, "and if I were dead I would have no use for the birthright, so we will trade."

But Jacob wanted to make sure that the birth-

right would be his, so he persisted, "Will you give me your solemn word that this is a bargain?"

And Esau answered, "By my solemn word, it is a bargain."

Then Jacob poured out a bowlful of the steaming soup and gave bread to eat with it, and Esau ate until he was satisfied, and then he went on into the house to see his father, but he was careful not to tell his father what he had done, for he was not proud of it.

But Jacob went straight to his mother and told her the whole story. He knew he could trust her to keep the secret, and he did not feel very proud of himself just then.

These two brothers were the sons of Isaac and the beautiful Rebekah, who had lived faithfully together since that day when she had come home to his tent, with the man whom Abraham had sent out to find a wife for his beloved son, to be a comfort and joy in their home.

These two sons had been born in their home, and they had been greatly beloved by their parents, for while Isaac loved Esau for his thoughtfulness of him when he went out to hunt, Rebekah loved Jacob for staying at home with her and helping her in many ways. The two boys were not at all alike, but each had his place in the affections of the parents.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Read the story told in the Bible about Esau

selling his birthright to Jacob, Gen. 27. 1-46.

2. Describe Jacob. Describe Esau. What family relationship did they bear to Abraham?
3. What was it Jacob so much wanted to get from Esau? Tell how he planned to trade him out of it.
4. What do you think of Esau's being willing to sell his birthright for something he liked to eat?
5. Do people in these times ever sell their birthright of health by indulgence in food or drink?
6. Do boys ever sell their birthright of success for the pleasure of smoking cigarettes?
7. Put in your notebook three good rules which you would observe in trying to keep your body strong and healthy.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESULT OF THE BARGAIN

Rebekah kept Jacob's secret about the trading of the soup for the birthright locked safely in her heart, but from the day when Jacob first told her about it she desired for him the precious thing which went with the birthright, and that was the father's blessing, which was always given to the eldest son. She did not know how this was to be brought about, but it was in her mind night and day.

So the years passed, and as Isaac grew older he became blind, and had to depend upon his family for many things which he had been able to do for himself in other years. When Esau went out to the hunt in these days he went far and wide to find the best and tenderest meat that he could for his dear father. Then when he came home he would dress the meat and prepare it himself in just the way that his father liked to have it, and this thoughtful kindness made Isaac love him more than ever.

At last the time came when Isaac felt that he had not much longer to live on the earth, so he began to plan for the future of his sons.

He called Esau to him one day and said: "My son, I have not much longer to live. Go out in

the field and bring me some of the savory venison to strengthen me, and then I will pronounce the blessing of the eldest son upon you, before I leave this earth."

So Esau took his bow and arrows and went out into the fields to hunt game for his father. He had no sooner left the house than Rebekah, eager to obtain the blessing for Jacob, began to plan how she might bring this about. She went to Jacob and said: "Now we must get the blessing for you. I will prepare savory meat and you must take it in to your father, and you will receive the blessing which he intends to bestow upon Esau."

But Jacob said: "My father will not be deceived. He knows that Esau's flesh is covered with hair, for he is a hairy man, and when he reaches out his hands to bless me he will know by the touch that I am not my brother."

But Rebekah was ready with a plan to meet this also, and she answered, "I will arrange for that also. I will bind the skin of a young goat on your hands and arms and neck, and when your father reaches out to touch you he will feel this and think it is Esau's flesh that he feels. Then he will surely pronounce the blessing upon you."

But Jacob was really afraid to undertake it, although his mother had planned it so carefully, and he told her so.

Then Rebekah said, "If anyone must be blamed, I will take all the blame myself."

So they worked together quickly, and when everything was ready Jacob went in to his father carrying the savory meat which his mother had prepared. As he entered the room he said, "My father."

And his father asked, "Who is this?"

And Jacob answered, "I am thy son, Esau. Eat some of this savory meat which I have brought, and then bless me."

But his father asked, "How did you get back from the field so soon, and get the meat prepared?"

And Jacob made answer, "God gave me good speed."

Then his father said, "Come near, that I may feel your flesh, for it seems that this is not Esau, my son."

So Jacob came near and knelt by his father, and Isaac ran his hands over the goat's hair that covered his son.

Then he said, "The voice is like the voice of Jacob, but the skin is surely that of Esau."

Isaac then ate the savory venison, and when he had finished he said, "Come near, and kiss me, my son." And Jacob obeyed.

Then Isaac said:

"God give thee of the dew of heaven,
And of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of corn and wine:
Let people serve thee,
And nations bow down to thee:

Be lord over thy brethren,
And let thy mother's son bow down to thee:
Cursed be every one that curseth thee,
And blessed be every one that blesseth thee."

Then Jacob rose and went out of the room, having received the blessing of the eldest son, which, once being given, could never be taken back.

Scarcely had Jacob left the presence of his father when Esau came home from the hunt, bringing rich venison for his father, whom he loved so dearly. When he had prepared it he brought it in and offered it to Isaac, saying, "Eat of this venison, my father, and then bless me!"

And his father cried out, "Who is this?"

And Esau answered, "I am Esau, thy first-born son."

Then Isaac trembled and feebly cried: "Who, then, have I already blessed with the blessing of the first-born? Who brought me savory meat and took away with him the blessing which belongeth to thee alone?"

Then Esau's heart was hot within him, and he fell down on his knees beside his father and begged and begged for the blessing for himself. But the real blessing had been given to Jacob and could not be taken back, and all that Isaac could say for him was this:

"Behold of the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling,
And of the dew of heaven from above;
And by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother;
And it shall come to pass when thou shalt break loose,
That thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck."

But Esau rose and left his father's presence with his heart filled with hatred toward his brother Jacob. For the sake of his father's last days he would not do anything that would make him unhappy, but he said, openly, "When the days of mourning for my father are over, then will I kill my brother Jacob."

Rebekah and Jacob had not realized how much the father's blessing really meant to Esau. They thought he was a careless fellow, fond of hunting, to whom blessings and family customs made no difference, but they were greatly mistaken. Esau had loved his father too deeply not to desire his parting blessing, and the anger that consumed him when he found himself tricked was terrible to see. He never stopped to think that they had a reason for supposing that he did not care for the blessing, since he had bartered the birthright for a bowl of soup.

Soon after this Isaac died and the family mourned for him many days with the ceremonies that were customary at that time.

When Rebekah heard that Esau was threatening to kill Jacob as soon as the days of mourning were ended, she began to plan for some way to protect Jacob from the wrath of his brother. She had seen Esau fly into rages before, but he always got over them quickly, and she thought he would get over this trouble in a little while. So she arranged to send Jacob to the home of her brother Laban in the land of Haran, and she said to him:

"Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; . . . and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence."

So Jacob made haste and slipped away from the house by night to go off to his Uncle Laban's home, to stay until his mother should send him word that Esau's wrath had cooled.

But he waited in vain, for the message never came. Jacob never saw his beautiful mother again, for she died while he was in the strange land, and he did not dare to return even then.

So Jacob lived on in the land of Haran.

STUDY TOPICS

1. The Bible story of how Jacob tricked Esau out of his father's blessing is found in Gen. 27. 1-35. Read it.

2. Why was Jacob so anxious to have his father's blessing? (Find out what a Hebrew father's blessing meant to a son.)
3. Describe the trick by which Jacob and his mother cheated Esau out of his blessing. What do you think of such a trick? Do you think that Esau's willingness to trade his birthright for a bowl of soup made his mother and brother think he would not greatly prize the blessing?
4. What did the blessing ask for Jacob? Could a blessing once given be taken back?
5. What was Jacob obliged to do in order to escape Esau's wrath? Do you think it really paid Jacob to secure his father's blessing by deceit?
6. We now have laws which punish anyone who "obtains money under false pretenses." What would have happened to Jacob had such a law been in effect in his land?

CHAPTER IX

AFTER MANY YEARS

WHAT a wonderful company it was! Flocks and herds, oxen and mules, camels laden with rich treasure, maidservants, menservants, drovers, herders, women, and children—and moving in and out among them the leader of the whole caravan.

This leader was dividing the people, the flocks and the herds into two great companies. Evidently he was preparing for an attack by an enemy, and as he planned he said to himself, "If one company should be attacked and captured, then we have the other to fall back upon. I must protect the women and the children," and he looked anxiously toward the rear of the train, where his own beloved wife and children were.

Then he lifted his eyes to heaven and prayed aloud: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Lord, which said unto me, 'Return to thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good': I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto me, for I went out from this country with a staff only, and I am returning

with this great company: Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of this man, for I fear him lest he come and smite me and my children and their mother. Thou hast promised to do me good; deliver me from harm, I pray thee."

It was Jacob who prayed this prayer, and who called upon the God of his fathers, for he was in trouble.

Many years had passed since that wretched night when Jacob had fled from his father's house for fear of the wrath of Esau, his brother, to whom he had done such a great wrong. His beautiful mother, Rebekah, had died many years ago, and he had not dared to return then.

He had gone to his Uncle Laban as she had directed him to do, but he had not found all the kindness that his mother had expected would be showed to him. He had worked for his uncle, and as the years went by he had learned to his sorrow that his uncle was shrewder than he, and that he was not always fair in his bargains. So Jacob had not had an easy life away from home. Many a time he had been homesick and his heart had ached with the longing to see his mother whom he loved so tenderly; but there was nothing for him but to remain with his Uncle Laban and take what was coming to him. But in spite of hardships and unfair treatment he had found much joy; for after being cruelly tricked he finally won for his wife the beautiful woman of his choice, and he grew rich and powerful.

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JACOB MEETING ESAU

Nevertheless, he never ceased to long for his native land and for his childhood home. Many times he was sorry in his heart for the wrong which he had done his brother, and he desired above everything else to be forgiven.

At last when he was having a very hard time in his uncle's house, the voice of God spoke to his heart and said, "Arise, go back to thy native land and I will be with thee and do thee good."

It was in obedience to this voice of God in his heart that Jacob was to-day by the brook Jabbok on his way back home. To-morrow he would come into his brother's land, and since he had never received any message of forgiveness, he was preparing for the battle which he was sure would have to take place when his brother found out that he was there.

He had sent messengers over the brook to tell his brother that he was coming, and they had returned with the news that his brother was advancing in his direction with a large company of men. So Jacob was preparing his two companies for the attack of the morning.

When night came he took his family across the brook and then returned to the other side, to be alone with God. All night long he prayed with all the strength of his soul to be forgiven for the sins of his life, and God heard his prayer and gave him a new name, which meant that his prayers had been heard, and that God had forgiven him.

Early in the morning Jacob saw Esau coming toward the company with a following of four hundred men. He had already arranged his own people so that the weaker ones would be protected, and the stronger ones would be in the front lines. Then with the spirit of a true leader, Jacob went forth to meet Esau alone, to learn the terms of the battle.

As he approached Esau he bowed himself to the ground seven times in token of respect, and when he lifted his eyes he saw that Esau was running toward him with his arms outstretched. Esau threw his arms around Jacob and kissed him. In that moment the quarrel was forgotten, the wrong was forgiven, and Jacob and Esau were more truly brothers than they had ever been before. Jacob went home with Esau, the great company following, and took up his abode in the land of his fathers.

Thus did Jacob, after many weary years in a strange land, return to the way of The Marked Trail.

STUDY TOPICS

Nearly one hundred years ago, a poem was published in England which was destined to become one of the greatest hymns of the world. The author of this poem was Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams, who wrote many other poems as well, but who has become known to almost every civi-

lized country since then through this poem, which was her masterpiece. If Sarah Flower Adams had not studied the life of the man about whom you have read in the preceding chapter of this book, she would not have known the story which made her able to do this splendid work. It was because she was thinking of what Jacob might have felt as he was alone in the night that she wrote this poem.

It was not the proud Jacob who went out from home with his brother's blessing who had the thoughts which the poem tells about, but the penitent Jacob who came back after years of struggle, the Jacob who wanted above everything else to be forgiven.

The music to the poem which made it into a great hymn was composed by Dr. Lowell Mason, a distinguished American, whose music is known and loved around the world.

It was twenty years after the words were written before this music was composed, but ever since then it has been sung and enjoyed everywhere, and was the favorite hymn of President William McKinley, who died in 1901 from an assassin's shot. The first lines of this hymn were the last words of the martyred President. The first verse is:

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

1. Try to find this hymn in your church hymnal, and after you have read it all turn to the book of Genesis in your Bible and read Chapter 28, verses 10 through 22.
2. Can you tell why the hymn is based on the story of Jacob's experience?
3. Copy the entire hymn in your notebook.

CHAPTER X

A BOY WHO HAD EVERYTHING HE WANTED

Once upon a time there was a boy who had everything he wanted, and who got almost everything that he asked for. His father gave him all that he could to make him happy, and besides all that, loved him better than any of his other children. To show that he was the favored son, although there were ten older brothers in the family, his father gave him a present which meant that he was the chief son in his father's eyes. This present was a coat made of such beautiful, bright colors that it attracted the attention of everyone who saw it.

Although he was a fine lad, he was very proud of this coat and when he wore it out among his brothers, the very sight of it made them angry. They knew that he was their father's favorite son, and they did not like this at all. He had a habit of doing one thing in particular that made his brothers dislike to have him around, and that was the habit of telling on them when they did what was wrong.

Sometimes when they were out keeping the sheep, they would get to quarreling with one another and the sheep would be neglected. Then

this younger brother would go home and tell his father about it, and their father would reprove them when they came in from the fields. When he was not with them the brothers used to talk about him, and they may have ended by saying something like this: "Just wait until we get a chance and we will get even with him. Just let us catch him out alone some time when our father is not near. We'll teach him a lesson that he won't forget very soon." And they meant what they said.

Another habit which he had made them angrier than the tale-bearing, and that was telling his dreams to them. He was always having dreams which he thought very wonderful, and he would run out in the fields in the mornings to tell his brothers about them. His brothers were not in the habit of dreaming themselves, and it worried them greatly to have to listen to his dreams. But one morning he came out and said: "Last night I dreamed a very strange dream. All of us were out in the field together binding sheaves of grain, and behold, my sheaf stood up straight, and all your sheaves bowed down to my sheaf."

His brothers were very angry indeed when he told this dream, and they said, "Perhaps you would have us think that you are greater than we are and that some day we will bow before you. Never think that we will do anything like that." And they hated him for his words and for his dreams.

But he made matters still worse one morning not long after this when he came out to them again and said, "Last night I dreamed a very strange dream. This time I saw the sun, moon, and stars bowing down before me." When the brothers heard this they were angrier than ever and said, "Perhaps you go so far as to say that the whole family will bow down to you some day. We will tell our father that you have told us this dream and we will see what he has to say about it this time."

"I have already told my father about the dream," he answered, "and my father said, 'Do you mean that your mother and I and all your brothers shall one day bow down to you?' And my father is troubled about this dream," and he walked away. Then they were angrier than they had ever been before, for they had thought this would be a chance to tell their father something that would make him angry with their brother.

Not long after this the brothers went off from home to find new pasture lands for their sheep in another region. After they had been gone some time their father wanted to find out how they were getting along and if the land was good for the sheep, so he called Joseph, who had stayed at home because he was not yet old enough to be a herder or shepherd, and said, "Go down to Shechem where your brothers herd the sheep and find out if all is well with them, and how the

sheep fare, and bring me back word about all of the affairs."

So the lad put on his beautiful bright coat and started out with his head high, for he thought it was a fine thing to be sent on this important errand away from home, to report to his father about the flocks and herds. It was his first journey alone, and he meant to bring back a faithful account of all that he saw and heard.

But when he came to the pasture lands in Shechem, his brothers were nowhere to be seen, and he was wandering around looking for them when a strange man came up to him and asked, "Whom are you seeking?".

"I am looking for my brothers who were feeding their flocks in this land," the boy replied.

"I know where they are," said the stranger. "I heard them say that they were going over the hills of Dothan, a few miles south of here."

Then the lad started to walk on to Dothan, hoping to find his brothers where the man had directed him.

The brothers on the hilltop saw him some time before he got to the place where they were, and they began to grumble among themselves, saying: "Here comes this dreamer wearing his grand-looking coat, following us here no doubt, to bear tales about us to our father. This is our chance to get rid of him. We will kill him and then tell our father that a wild beast caught him and ate him up as he was on the way to find us."

All the brothers agreed to this except one, who was named Reuben, and he said,

"Let us not shed his blood, for, after all, he is our brother, and that would be a dreadful sin; rather let us throw him into one of these pits to die."

Now, down in his heart Reuben was kinder than the others, and he meant to slip away before they put him into the pit and then come back after they were gone and draw him out and set him free. The others thought Reuben's plan was a good one, so he slipped away; and they took the boy's beautiful coat from him and threw him into the pit and were just about to leave him to die when they looked up and saw a company of wandering merchants coming that way, going to Egypt to sell their goods.

"Why not sell the boy to these merchants as a slave?" said one of the brothers. "Then we will not be guilty of his death, and he will be out of our way forever, and we can have a little peace in the family when we are rid of his tale-bearing."

"Good!" cried the others; so before the merchants got up to them, they drew him up out of the pit, and when the men came near they offered their brother for sale as a slave. The merchants were glad enough to buy him, for he was a fine-looking lad, and healthy, and they knew they could make money on him when they sold him in the market. So the merchants bought him for twenty pieces of silver.

Then the brothers killed a young goat and dipped the beautiful coat of many colors in its blood and started on their way home. After a while Reuben came back from another direction, and going to the pit looked in, meaning to rescue his brother, but, lo! the pit was empty and his brother was nowhere to be seen.

When the brothers reached home in the evening, their father was sitting near the gate watching for Joseph to come home bringing news of how his brothers fared as they kept the sheep in the land far away from home.

But to his dismay he saw all the brothers except Joseph, and they were carrying something which looked very familiar to him, and it filled him with terror.

As they drew near, one of them said to him, "Father, can you tell what this is?" Although it was deep crimson and damp to the touch, Jacob knew only too well what it was. He wrung his hands and cried out in sorrow, "Alas! this is the coat of my well-beloved son, Joseph! Some evil beast must have slain him! My son, O my son!" And Jacob wept and mourned and nothing could comfort him.

Then the brothers were terribly frightened, for they had not thought that their father's grief would be so awful to see, but they did not dare to tell him the truth of the matter, for they actually did not know that Joseph was still alive, for traveling in caravans in those days was full of danger

because of the highway robbers who lurked in the rocks.

So Jacob grieved daily, and the brothers were sorry every day for what they had done in a moment of jealous anger, but it was too late to change things then.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Read the interesting story of Joseph told in Genesis, Chapter 37.
2. What was the cause of Joseph's brothers plotting against him?
3. Tell the story of Joseph's two dreams. Why did these dreams make the brothers still more angry?
4. Tell the story of how Joseph was sold as a slave to be carried to Egypt.
5. Tell the story of how the brothers attempted to deceive their father about what had happened to Joseph.
6. Commit these lines to memory:

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
. . . . . .
For there the Lord commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore."

7. Try to find a picture which illustrates a family of brothers together. Attach this to your note book.

   Write an account of something which brothers might do together for their own pleasure.

CHAPTER XI

A SERIES OF ADVENTURES

The caravan had returned from the long and dangerous journey through the deserts, bringing the cloth and silk and precious stones which the people delighted to see. It was always a great event when the caravans came in.

Men and women were gathered at the bazaar, each hoping to be able to buy the thing which pleased him most. The merchants were glad, for they saw they were to have a brisk trade that day, and be well repaid for all the hardships of the journey. They had something unusual to offer for sale to-day, and they rubbed their hands with satisfaction as they anticipated their profits.

When the market opened, the customers seated on the mats waiting to hear the prices of the rich goods which were on display were astonished to see one of the merchants come forward with a tall and handsome young man by his side and to hear him call out, "A slave to sell, a slave to sell! Who will buy? Who will buy a slave?"

In the company of buyers was a man named Potiphar, a captain in Pharaoh's army. When he saw the young man he decided at once to buy him for a slave, for he needed some one to help him with his affairs. Potiphar was a good judge

of men and he knew as soon as he saw Joseph that this was no ordinary young man. So it came about that Joseph found himself a member of the household of one of Pharaoh's captains—a slave.

As the days went by and Joseph fulfilled his duties with intelligence and promptness, Pharaoh's captain became more and more convinced that he had made a wise choice in bringing Joseph into his household. He trusted this young man with all his money affairs, and did not even require him to give an account of what he spent. Potiphar had to go away from home very often in the army of Egypt, and when he left he put Joseph in charge of his family and trusted him entirely. All of Potiphar's affairs prospered under the hand of Joseph, and when he found that Joseph prayed and worshiped God the captain had even greater confidence in him.

But in Potiphar's household there were some who were jealous of all the kindness which was shown to Joseph, and these men made a plot to try to get rid of him. When the captain returned from one of his expeditions away from home, these plotters were ready with an ugly story about Joseph which they felt sure would rouse Potiphar's anger.

It turned out just as they desired, for the master was so angry that he would not even give Joseph a chance to explain that it was not true, but had him thrown into prison at once.

There in the prison Joseph found a friend in the keeper of the prisoners, for, like Potiphar, the keeper of the prison soon discovered that this young man was different from the other men he had kept in ward, and before long he put Joseph in charge of some of the other prisoners. He had found out that Joseph could be trusted. Here in the prison Joseph kept his faith in God firmly in his heart, and when the keeper learned that Joseph trusted in God, he had even more faith in Joseph than he had had before he found this out. One day there came to the prison two of the servants of Pharaoh's household, who had been cast into prison because they had displeased their master. One was the royal butler, the other the royal baker, and they were put in Joseph's charge. Joseph was kind to them, and they told him about their affairs.

When they awoke one morning they were greatly troubled, and they talked together about the strange dreams which they had dreamed in the night, and which troubled them so greatly, and at last they told Joseph and asked him if he could tell them what their dreams meant.

This must have made Joseph think of the days of his childhood when he had told his own dreams to his brothers, and he listened carefully while the men made their dreams known to him.

The butler said, "In my dream I saw a vine, and it had three branches, and the branches budded, and blossoms came forth, and then clusters

of ripe grapes hung upon the vines. I had the king's cup in my hand, and I pressed the juice from the grapes into the cup, and handed it to the king. Can you tell the meaning of this strange dream."

Joseph said: "To God alone belongs the full knowledge of dreams, but he has given me power to interpret them. Your dream means that in three days you will be set free from prison and restored to your former place as butler to the king. When this comes to pass, will you speak to the king for me, and tell him that I have been thrown into this prison on a false charge, and that I have done nothing wrong?"

And the butler promised Joseph that he would speak to the king as soon as he was free.

Then the baker said, "In my dream I carried three baskets of white bread on my head, and in the top basket were all manner of bake meats for the king's table, and as I walked the birds of the air flew down and ate the bake meats from the top basket. Can you tell the meaning of my dream?"

It made Joseph sad to have to tell the meaning of this dream, but he had to tell the truth, so he said, "Your dream means that in three days you will be hanged upon a tree, among the birds of the air."

In three days after this the king's birthday was celebrated, and on that day the butler was released from the prison, but the baker was hanged

upon a tree. Thus Joseph's words came to pass, but the royal butler, in his joy at being free, forgot all about his promise to Joseph.

For two years longer Joseph stayed in the prison and then a strange thing took place. The king began to dream dreams that troubled him, and he dreamed exactly the same dreams twice in succession.

He sent for all his wise men and his interpreters, but none of them could explain the meaning of the dreams.

Then the butler remembered his promise to Joseph, and he came before the king and said, "O King, I remember my faults this day, for while I was in the prison I dreamed a strange dream which was interpreted for me truly by a man who had been cast into the prison on a false charge. I promised him that I would speak for him when I came into your presence, and ask for his release, and not until this day have I remembered my promise. This man, O King, could tell the full meaning of your dream."

"Send for this man," commanded the king, "and I will see if he can interpret my strange dreams."

So Joseph was summoned from the prison to appear before the king, as an interpreter of his dreams.

The king said, "I dreamed that I stood on the brink of a river, and seven cows came up from the river. They were fat and well-favored, and

they ate of the grass growing on the banks of the river. After them there came up seven cows that were thin and hungry, unlike any other cows I had ever seen in the land of Egypt. The thin and hungry cows ate the fat and well-favored ones and were no fatter than before. Then I awoke, but when I slept again I dreamed that I saw seven ears of grain on one stalk, full and good; but after them I saw seven thin and blasted ears, and the thin ears devoured the full ears, but were no fuller afterward. None of the wise men of my kingdom can interpret these dreams. Do you understand their meaning?"

Then Joseph made answer, "O King, to God alone belongs the full understanding of dreams, and he has given me the wisdom to interpret thy dream. The seven fat cows and the seven full ears of grain stand for seven years; and the seven thin cows and the seven blasted ears of grain stand for seven years. The dream means that there shall be seven years of plenty in your land followed by seven years of famine, and the two dreams which are so much alike mean that it shall surely come to pass. During the years of plenty the earth shall yield great abundance, but during the years of famine the earth will bring forth nothing. Now, O King, choose a man of judgment from among your subjects, who shall go over the whole land of Egypt, appointing overseers in every district, and let him gather in the grain into store cities during the years of plenty,

that in the years of famine there may be food in this land. Let one fifth of all the grain be gathered and stored, then shall the people of Egypt have food when there is none in the fields."

The king was pleased with Joseph, and he said to the people of his court, "Where shall we find such a man? He should have wisdom and the spirit of the Lord to fit him for this great work."

But the people had no name to propose for the office. Then the king turned to Joseph and said: "As the Lord has given you the power to interpret my dreams, so will he give you wisdom and judgment to direct this great work. You shall gather in the grain and store it in storehouses, and you shall be second only to me in the kingdom. Only in sitting upon the throne will I be greater than you."

Then the king took off his royal ring with which he stamped his sign on the things which he approved, and he gave the signet ring to Joseph in token that he might have the right to sign for the king. He also put a golden chain around Joseph's neck as a mark of his favor, and gave him the kind of clothing which the king's representative should wear, and Joseph became the greatest man in the king's household. He was given a chariot in which to ride as he went about the country on business for the king, and heralds cried before him, "Bow the knee to Joseph."

The king added an Egyptian title, "Zaphenathpaneah," to Joseph's name, which means,

"God speaks and lives," and Joseph entered his new work in the name of the Lord.

STUDY TOPICS

Words that might have comforted Joseph in his troubles. They were written by a fellowcountryman of his, David. Commit to memory one verse, choosing the one you like best.

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
Even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.

Though an host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war should rise against me,
Even then I will be confident.

For in the day of trouble he will keep me secretly in his pavilion:
In the covert of his tabernacle will he hide me;
He shall lift me up upon a rock.

I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord
In the land of the living.

Wait on the Lord;
Be strong, and let thy heart take courage;
Yea, wait thou on the Lord.

(From Psalm 27.)

CHAPTER XII

HOW JOSEPH WON A GREAT VICTORY

JACOB sat with his hands clasped upon his staff, and his head bowed in perplexity and sorrow. There was no food in the land, and the animals and the people in his household would soon be in want. He had money in plenty, but of what use was money to him when there was no food to be had?

His strong sons stood helpless before him. There was no grain in their barns either, and they could not bear to see their father so troubled in his old age, while they were powerless to help him. At last they ventured to say: "There is grain and to spare down in the land of Egypt, we have been told, and we can journey thither to buy if the great man there will sell to those from another land. We will take much money with us and perhaps he can be persuaded to sell enough to keep us alive."

So Jacob gave his consent, and the men started off with empty sacks on the backs of their animals, hoping that they might return with the sacks full of grain.

There were ten of them in the company, but the

youngest brother stayed at home with his old father. This youngest brother was named Benjamin, and he was as the apple of his father's eye. Jacob had taken care of Benjamin ever since he had been a baby, when his mother died, and he loved him very tenderly. He would never let Benjamin go far from home because he was always afraid something would happen to him; for Jacob had never forgotten his grief for his son Joseph, whom he had sent on an errand from which he had not returned. The other sons knew how their father felt about Benjamin, and they did not even ask for him to go with them. They had been so sorry for the wrong thing they had done about Joseph in the years gone by that they had tried in every way to make up to their father for the sorrow they had caused him, but they had never told him the truth about selling their brother to the caravan, and as no news had ever come of him, they were sure he was dead.

When the company of Jacob's ten sons arrived in Egypt they found that the grain was being sold at the king's storehouse under the direction of the king's own representative. The place was crowded with those who had already come to buy, and the brothers had to wait patiently their turn. One by one the buyers left, having obtained the grain which they came to buy, but when the ten brothers appeared before the great man and he discovered that they were from another land, he asked, "From whence do you come?" and they an-

swered, "We come from the land of Canaan to buy grain for food."

But to their amazement the governor answered, "I think you are spies. I will not sell you grain unless you can prove that you are not spying."

"Truly we are not spies," they protested. "We have come to buy because there is no grain in Canaan where we live. We are all brothers, the sons of the same father, and we are good men and true."

"But I still think that you are spies," said the governor, "and I will not sell to you until I am certain that what you say is true."

At this the men began to tell their family history, trying to convince the governor that it was all right to let them have the grain. They finally said, "There were twelve of us, but one of our brothers is dead, and the youngest one is at home with our father, for our father is growing old."

When he had heard their story the governor said, "If you would have me believe all of this, you must bring your youngest brother here with you that I may see him. Nine of you must stay here and one of your number must go home and bring the youngest brother here."

Then he put them all in charge of a guard. The brothers were in despair. They knew that their father would never consent to have Benjamin come over into Egypt, and therefore there was no hope of getting the grain, and they must all starve even if this cruel man should ever let them go

home. He kept them in guard for three days and then sent for them to be brought before him.

"I have thought it over," he said, "and I have changed my plan. I will sell you the grain, and nine of you may go home. But one of you shall remain in my land under guard until the rest of you return with this youngest brother of whom you have told me. And be very sure you may have no more grain nor even look upon my face again unless you obey my commands and bring the lad back with you."

The brothers turned aside and talked among themselves, saying, "Surely this is a righteous judgment sent upon us for what we did in other years when we sold our young brother to the caravan." But they were very careful not to let the governor hear them.

Simeon agreed to stay bond in the governor's house while the brothers returned to their father with the grain which was to keep him from starving.

In the meantime the governor himself went outside and gave a secret order to his overseer. This was, that the overseer must put back into the top of each of the brother's grain sacks the money which they had brought with them to buy the grain.

On the way home the men opened their sacks to take out grain for the hungry animals, and there they found the money which they had taken to Egypt with them. They were filled with dis-

may, but they dared not go back for fear they never would get home to their old father, who was waiting for the grain.

When they did get home they told their father about the money the very first thing, and then they told of the conditions which the strange man had laid upon them before he would sell them any grain and what he required of them if they were to try to buy any more.

When Jacob heard this, although he was unhappy to think of Simeon left in the strange land, nevertheless he said, "I will never let Benjamin leave me to go into Egypt. I sent Joseph on an errand away from home and he never returned, and Benjamin shall never leave me."

By and by all the grain which the brothers had brought from Egypt had been eaten, and there was still no food to be had in their own land, so they pleaded with their father to change his mind.

"There is no food in the land," they said, "and Benjamin and all the rest of us must die if we have no grain, so what will be gained by keeping him at home? The man said we should not even look upon his face again unless we brought our youngest brother with us, therefore, we pray you, let him go with us."

At last Judah, one of the brothers, stood forth and said:

"Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou,

and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not to thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever: for except we had lingered, surely we had now returned a second time."

So in order to save the lives of all the rest Jacob finally gave his consent for Benjamin to go with the brothers, but it grieved him to do so.

The men took rich presents with them, of such things as they had left in their land, hoping in this way to make the stern governor feel more kindly toward them, as well as to prove that they had paid for the grain which they had bought the first time, even though the money was found in their sacks when they were on the way home. Their father bade them a sorrowful good-by, and the brothers started out on their second trip into the strange land.

When Joseph heard that they were at the gate again begging to buy grain he sent orders to his chief cook, saying, "Make a great dinner, for I shall have guests to-day, as all these men will dine with me."

When the brothers came in they were terribly afraid because of the money which they had found in their sacks when they had started home from Egypt, so they bowed to the very earth before the great man, hoping to escape his anger. Then they told the overseer about finding the money in their sacks, and, to their amazement, he said, "Do

not be afraid. I put that money back in your sacks myself, and my master will not be angry with you because of it." Then he went in and brought Simeon out to see them and they were thankful indeed to find him sound and well and glad to see them back again.

At noon they were brought in to dine with the governor and when they entered they bowed to the very earth before him, for they stood in awe of him. The first thing that the great man said, was, "Is your father alive and well?" and they answered, "He is alive and well." Then he saw Benjamin, the youngest brother, standing among them, and he said, "Is this your youngest brother, the one of whom you told me?" and he turned to Benjamin and said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." Then suddenly, he left them and went into his own room to be alone. They could not imagine what had happened, but if they had dared to open the door, they would have seen the stern governor weeping like a child.

After a while he came back and they sat down to dinner. They had a wonderful meal and a happy time, for they were sure the great man no longer thought they were spies.

When the servants were filling the sacks with grain Joseph sent another secret message to his overseer. This time he said, "Put my own silver cup in the sack belonging to the youngest one." And the overseer saw that this was done.

At the end of the dinner the brothers started

home with their sacks full of grain. They had not gone far when a messenger from the governor came running after them.

"Some one has taken our master's silver cup," he cried, "and I have come to find out if one of you has it."

Of course, the brothers were very angry at this, and they said: "We have not your master's cup! We never took anything that did not belong to us in our lives!"

But the man said, "Let me look in your sacks and see if no one has it."

The men willingly enough put their sacks down on the ground to be searched, and there in Benjamin's sack was the governor's silver cup. The brothers were filled with dismay. They knew Benjamin had not taken the cup, but they did not know how they could prove his innocence. So they turned about sadly and started back to the governor's house with him. When they arrived the governor came out to meet them and said, "How could you do such a thing as this in return for my kindness to you?"

At this Judah stood forth and made such a noble speech, telling of his father's love for Benjamin, of his promise to bring him home in safety, and of the sorrow in his father's heart if anything should happen to his youngest son, the comfort of his old age, that the governor could hold out no longer. "Send everyone else out of the room," he cried; "leave me alone with these men."

When they were alone he threw his arms around them and cried, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt so many years ago. But grieve no longer that you did this thing to me, for God intended it for good. He has used me to save your lives, for there are still five years more of famine and there is grain and to spare in Egypt. A power greater than yours sent me into this land that I might be a deliverer. Hasten home to my father and tell him that I am alive and well, and that I have houses and lands, and food and to spare for all of you; for I am second only to the king in power. Bring your wives and your children, and your flocks and herds, and come and live with me, and you shall be nourished while the famine shall last, and you shall have nothing to fear."

They were filled with such joy and amazement that they could not speak for a while, and Joseph kissed them every one in token of his full forgiveness.

When the king heard of this he was overjoyed for Joseph's sake, and said, "Tell your brothers to go back to Canaan and take a message of welcome to your father from me. Take wagons from Egypt to bring the little ones back in, and your family shall have the best land that I can give them as a present."

Then the brothers hastened home to their father with the glad news that Joseph was alive and the governor of Egypt, second only to the king in

authority and power, and that he had sent for Jacob and all the household to come down into Egypt and live in peace and plenty under his protection.

At first the news was too great for Jacob. He could not believe that the son for whom he had grieved as dead was alive and well in Egypt. But when he did fully understand he said, "If my beloved son Joseph is alive, I must see him again before I die."

So they all made ready to move down into Egypt, and it was a joyful company when they set out on the journey. When Joseph heard that they were near the city he ordered his chariot and drove forth in haste to meet his father and do him honor. When they met they threw their arms around each other and wept aloud for joy.

When he could speak, Jacob said, "Now that I have seen your face again, my beloved son, and know that all is well with you, I can be at peace in my heart all the rest of my life."

So for many years they lived happily in the land of Egypt, where Joseph provided a house for his father, in the midst of his children and grandchildren, and Jacob was never so happy as when he held Joseph's children upon his knee and told them the stories of their father's childhood days.

STUDY TOPICS

1. In what country did Jacob and his sons

live? Had the famine foretold by Joseph from Pharaoh's dream extended beyond Egypt? How did it happen that there was grain to spare in Egypt?

2. How many sons had Jacob? What was the name of the youngest? Why did his father not want him to go to Egypt with his brothers?
3. Tell the story of the reception of Jacob's sons by the officer in charge of the king's storehouse when they made their first trip. Who was this officer?
4. Why do you think Joseph had the money put back into the sacks of grain? How did he make sure that the brothers would bring Benjamin to see him?
5. Tell the story of the second trip into Egypt for grain and the result of it.
6. Add to the last work in your notebook an account of something which any family of brothers might do together for the good of the whole family.

CHAPTER XIII

MAKING A CHOICE

How they labored in the hot sun, carrying heavy burdens upon their stooped shoulders, working with their hardened hands in the stiff clay, laying the stones one upon the other, measuring, climbing, and walking, walking, walking up and down on the walls bearing the materials to the builders! Not for one moment did they dare to stop, although they might be panting for breath, or ready to fall beneath their heavy loads; for the cruel taskmasters stood ever near with whips in their hands ready to strike the first one who paused at his task. Every once in a while the overseer would crack his whip and call out, "The lash is in my hand; be not idle!"

Near the place where they worked stood a tall, handsome young man watching with troubled face. He seemed to belong to the royal household, for his clothes were such as the rich and powerful wore. His heart burned within him as he gazed at this scene of cruelty and injustice. He must have been thinking of other days and perhaps thoughts like these went through his mind: "How can I stand here dressed in soft clothing taking my ease when these, my brethren,

are bending beneath the heavy loads? The princess has been kind to me all these years, and I know that if she had not taken pity on me, a helpless baby in a basket among the bulrushes by the water's edge, I should have been killed in infancy by the command of the cruel Pharaoh. How thankful I am that my sister, Miriam, hid in the tall reeds and saw the princess take me in her arms. Because of Miriam's loving watchfulness I can be thankful that it was my own mother who was chosen to nurse me, and care for me. How well I know the story of the sufferings and injustices that have been visited upon the people of my own nation! How can I be content to go on living as the son of Pharaoh's daughter when my own people need me?" And the young man turned and walked back to his beautiful apartments in the palace, with a load upon his heart heavier than the burdens borne by his countrymen as they builded the store cities for the Egyptian ruler.

The next day the young man returned to the place where his countrymen labored on the walls, and he longed to help in some way, although he did not know how to go about it. Suddenly something happened that made him act before he had time to think twice. One of the taskmasters raised his heavy whip and struck viciously at one of the weary men who had paused at his work. The laborer staggered under the cruel blow, then fell to the ground in a helpless way. At once

the young man in the royal robes sprang forward. In his anger he struck the cruel Egyptian, who toppled over dead from the fierce blow. The other workers had kept on steadily at their labors, never daring to look up, whatever happened, lest they too should feel the taskmaster's lash upon their shoulders; so the young man thought no one had seen his deed.

He picked up the body of the Egyptian and hid it in the sand. Then he returned to the palace and his heart was heavier than ever.

The next day he went again to the place of the building, and this time as he watched, he heard two of his own countrymen quarreling together when the overseer could not hear them. The young man spoke to them and begged them not to quarrel, but they, not knowing that he was their friend, and thinking that he was on the side of the Egyptians, answered roughly. They had seen him the day before as he was burying the taskmaster in the sand and they did not know that he had killed the man in defense of one of their own number. They must have thought that he had had a quarrel with the man on his own account, so they said to him, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you think you will kill us as you killed the Egyptian?"

Then the young man knew that he had been discovered in his deed, and he knew, moreover, that if news of this came to Pharaoh he would pay for it with his life, unless the royal princess

would protect him. But he did not want to be protected; he wanted to get away. The gorgeous hangings, the cool fountains in the palace courts, the royal favorites had grown hateful in his sight since he had watched the laborers toiling in the sun, and if he could not help them he could at least give up living like a prince himself. So that night the young man left the palace forever and went out into the country to earn his living among strangers.

* * *

Years had passed since the young man went out into the world to earn a livelihood. A shepherd sat on the ground watching his flocks as they grazed behind the mountain, in the land of Midian. The sun was scorching hot, and the shepherd sat and thought of other days. The picture of his countrymen toiling in the sun in Egypt had never left his mind, nor had he ever ceased to long to help them. He stared at the bushes as he remembered his friends. The bushes were scorched by the sun. It seemed as if they too had suffered. Suddenly the bush nearest to him seemed to blaze with fire, and yet it was not destroyed. From the heart of the bush a voice spoke to the shepherd, saying, "Moses, Moses," and the shepherd answered, "Here am I." Then the voice said:

"The place whereon thou standest is holy ground.... I am the God of thy father, the God

of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. . . . I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . Come, now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt."

Moses could not take it in at first that in answer to his own burning wish and prayer he was to be chosen to deliver his brethren from their bondage in Egypt. He did not feel worthy to be a great leader, so he replied to God, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

And God answered, "Certainly I will be with thee: and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee; when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain."

"Whom shall I say has sent me on this mission?" asked Moses.

"Say that the Lord Jehovah has sent you," was the answer. "Go in my name and gather the heads of the families together. Tell them to go with you before the king of Egypt asking him to let you go on a three-days' journey into the wilderness to worship before the Lord. At first he

will not give you permission to go, but I will put forth my hand upon Egypt with all my wonders and at last he will let the people go."

"But they will not believe me nor hearken to my voice, nor believe that I am sent by the Lord God," said Moses.

"What is in thy hand?" the Lord asked Moses.

"A rod," he answered.

"Cast it upon the ground," commanded the Lord.

Moses cast the rod upon the ground and it became a crawling serpent. Then Moses was afraid to touch it, but the Lord said, "Put forth thy hand and take it up," and Moses obeyed; and when he picked it up the serpent became a rod again. This was only one of the wonders which God gave Moses the power to perform in order that he might convince Pharaoh that he had been sent by God to speak for the people. For Pharaoh would not be moved by words alone.

In spite of all this, Moses hesitated to go, for he did not think that he could speak well enough to persuade the people to listen to him. He did not imagine he could ever get the attention of Pharaoh with his slow speech, so he was afraid he would fail in the great work which God desired him to carry out.

God understood Moses; so Aaron, Moses' older brother, was chosen to go along with him to make the speeches, while Moses was to be the leader in the undertaking.

Study Topics

Many years have passed between the day when Joseph sent for his father and brothers to come down into Egypt to make their home and the time when the events of this lesson occur. The Hebrews have multiplied until they number many thousands, and the Egyptians have turned against them and made them slaves.

1. Tell the story of the early life of Moses. You have often heard the story, which is found in Exod. 2. 1-10.
2. Out of what did the Egyptians build most of their houses? their pyramids? What is meant by "making bricks without straw"? Where is this expression found in the Bible?
3. Tell how you think Moses felt when he saw the Egyptian overseer strike the Hebrew workers. Do you think he meant to kill the Egyptian, or that in his anger he struck harder than he intended?
4. Tell the story of how Moses learned that his killing of the Egyptian was known. What did Moses do when he learned that his act had been seen?
5. Tell the story of God calling Moses to go to deliver his people out of their Egyptian slavery.

CHAPTER XIV

A MAN WHO DEFIED GOD

The haughty Pharaoh sat upon his throne. Before him stood the heads of the Hebrew families. Moses and Aaron were at the head of the company. All this was in obedience to the directions which God had given to Moses as he watched his sheep in Midian. Aaron was speaking, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a solemn feast in the wilderness.' "

The haughty Pharaoh answered, "Who is the Lord that I should hearken to his voice to let the people go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let the people go."

Then just because Moses and Aaron and the heads of the Hebrew families had dared to come before him, making such a request for the people, Pharaoh decided to make it harder than ever for the laborers in the sun, who were building his store cities. He sent out orders that very day to his taskmasters, commanding that in the future no more straw should be given to the men who made the brick, and that they should be required to turn out just as many bricks every day as they had been able to make when they were allowed

straw. This was impossible; and although the workers toiled to the limit, they could not come up to the new standards set by the taskmasters.

But while the workers were toiling against difficulties, Pharaoh himself began to learn something about trouble which he could not overcome. One after another calamities came upon the land of Egypt, but the Hebrew people did not suffer from them.

Moses and Aaron appeared before Pharaoh, after each new disaster, begging him to let the people go, and trying to make him see that the hand of God was against him, because he refused to hear their messages. Sometimes Pharaoh was on the point of consenting, and he would say that the people might go, but before they could get started he would go back on his word and compel them to remain at work in Egypt. Thus Pharaoh steadily set his will against the will of God in the matter of the Hebrew people.

At last there came an awful night in the land of Egypt. In the home of every Egyptian family the eldest son lay dead, but in the Hebrew families all were alive and well. The Angel of Death had passed through the land that night; but where he had seen a red mark on the door lintel he had not entered. These were the homes of the Hebrews, and their doors had been marked with the blood of a lamb, according to the command of God, which had come to them through Moses. At last God was to show forth his power

to the daring Pharaoh who had defied him. Moses told the people to be ready to leave the land in the middle of the night, for he knew that Pharaoh would at last let them go.

When Pharaoh found out the awful thing which had happened, he knew that his cruelty to helpless people was receiving its just punishment, so he called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord. Take both your flocks and your herds, and be gone."

So the people, who were ready to leave at a moment's notice, gathered their belongings together and set forth in a great company to escape from the cruel tyrant in Egypt. Moses gave directions to take the road toward the Red Sea, for he knew if they were once safely across, Pharaoh could not get them if he should change his mind, as he had so often done before. As a guide to speed them on their journey God gave them a column of smoke to lead them by day and a column of fire to lead them by night. As long as they could see these signals they knew that the Lord was leading and watching over them.

After they had gone some distance Pharaoh realized how much he had lost by letting so many valuable workmen, who were his slaves, leave the land, and he was sorry that he had decided to yield to Moses and Aaron when he was in trouble. So he called his soldiers together and made ready

to pursue them and capture them before they got out of the country. It was an imposing company of horsemen and chariots and captains and soldiers, with the mighty Pharaoh himself at the head.

The Hebrews were encamped by the Red Sea when they heard the distant rumble of the chariot wheels. They knew that they were being pursued. Which way should they turn to escape? If they went back, they would meet the approaching army. If they went forward, they would be drowned in the sea. In their trouble they cried unto God. Then they complained to Moses that he had only caught them in a trap from which they could not escape, by bringing them out of Egypt. But Moses said: "The Lord shall fight for you. Hold your peace."

At once the column of cloud removed from in front of the company and stood behind them, between them and the oncoming Egyptian army, and while it gave light to the Hebrews it darkened the way of the Egyptians and confused them. All that night God sent a strong East wind and it blew against the Red Sea until the waters were driven back and the sea became dry ground where the bed of it was uncovered in front of the place where the children of Israel were encamped. When Moses saw that there was a path through the sea, he gave the command for the company to move across at once, and they passed over, every one of them, safely, on dry

ground. Just as the last one reached the other side Pharaoh and his hosts came charging down on the Egyptian side of the sea. On he plunged and his army followed, but, alas! Pharaoh had not counted on who was leading the children of Israel, for he defied God. No sooner were they all out on the bed of the sea than the waters returned to their natural place and Pharaoh and all his hosts were drowned in the midst of the sea.

Thus did God deliver his people and set them free to follow Moses to a new home.

Some of the Song which Miriam Sang with Moses

"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath
triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown
into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and my song,
And he is become my salvation:
This is my God, and I will praise him;
My father's God, and I will exalt him.
Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he
cast into the sea;
And his chosen captains are sunk in the
Red Sea.
Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among
the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
Thou in thy mercy hast led the people
which thou hast redeemed:

Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them
in the mountain of thine inheritance,
The place, O Lord, which thou hast made
for thee to dwell in."

STUDY TOPICS

1. Who was Miriam? Where have you heard of her before in connection with the story of Moses' life?
2. What were the disasters God sent upon Pharaoh and his people before Pharaoh would consent to let the Israelites go?
3. Read Exod. 12. 21-36 and then tell the story of the Passover.
4. Tell the story of how the Israelites got across the arm of the Red Sea and what befell the Egyptians. Read the Bible story found in Exod. 14. 15-31.
5. By what means did God direct the Israelites the way to go and convince them that he was leading them?

CHAPTER XV

SEEKING THE TRAIL

"How well do I remember that day when I stood hidden in the reeds by the Nile! Even to this day in my mind's eye I can see the little ark daubed with pitch to keep out the water. When I saw the princess coming my heart fluttered like a bird. She was wonderful to look upon, that Egyptian princess, in her embroidered robes, as she came down the path carrying her head so proudly as her attendants waved the great palm fans slowly back and forth and protected her from the burning sun. I felt sure when I once saw her face that our little brother was safe, and that our mother had been wise when she trusted him in the ark to the mercy of the Lord.

"When the princess picked him up and held him in her arms and looked lovingly in his face I knew it was safe for me to speak. I well remember how I ran down to her side and asked, 'Shall I find you a nurse for him among the Hebrew women?' and she said, 'Yes.' What a happy day it was for me! I ran and brought our own mother, though the princess knew it not, and she took her child back into her arms. Do you not think, Aaron, that all of it was in the hands of the Lord?

"Would Moses ever have been stirred with sorrow at the sufferings of our people if our mother had not taught him the history and the traditions of his own nation as he grew up in the palace of the Pharaoh? I am proud and thankful indeed that I had even a small part in shaping his childhood. Are you not proud to be the brother of the great leader of Israel?"

Thus Miriam talked with Aaron as they sat resting after the Song of Triumph had been sung in gratitude for the passing through the Red Sea.

"In very truth I am proud to be his helper," answered Aaron, "and I mean to stand by him always, ready whenever he needs me, and even as you, Miriam, play upon the timbrel and sing glorious songs, and urge the people forward with your noble words, so shall I repeat in the hearing of the people the messages which Moses receives from the Lord God. I never shall fail him, but will uphold his hands whenever he has need of me."

As Miriam and Aaron sat and talked thus together and pledged their loyalty to Moses and committed themselves to stand together as a united family, they little dreamed of all that lay before them in carrying out this pledge. Perhaps many times in the forty years which followed they had reason to think of this day when they had promised one another to be faithful to their brother. Many a perilous day did they pass; many adventures did they have by land and by

water; through the rough and howling wilderness did the way lead as they struggled to find the way back to the Marked Trail—the pathway God meant for them to follow. But Miriam and Aaron and Moses suffered and endured, for God had promised to be with Moses, and they knew that God's promises never failed.

The company had not traveled far until they began to find fault with Moses because their provisions were giving out.

"We wish we were back in the land of Egypt where we came from," they grumbled, "for there we at least had enough to eat. We have been brought out in this desert place to starve."

God heard the people murmuring against Moses before he heard it himself, for God knew the very thoughts of their hearts. He called Moses to come to a quiet place and there he gave him a message for the people. God said, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion for each day, that I may prove them, whether they will obey me. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall gather twice as much, for none shall be gathered on the seventh day, for that is the Sabbath."

Then Moses and Aaron came to the people with the glad message that they were to be fed by the very hand of the Lord, and for forty years this food did not fail. In the morning God sent a small white thing on the ground for bread; this

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THE FINDING OF MOSES

bread was called manna. In the evenings he sent quail for meat.

There came a time when the water supply gave out and the people were suffering with thirst. Again they murmured against Moses, but God came to the rescue and showed Moses how to bring water out of the rocks, and the people had all they needed to drink.

At one time such fierce enemies came up against the children of Israel that it seemed as if they would be wiped out of existence, but God made the decree, that as long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites should be victorious, but if he let them down, the enemy should be victorious. Aaron must have had cause to remember his early promise, for he stood by Moses on one side, while Hur stood on the other, and when Moses grew so weary that he could hold up his hands no longer, they put their hands under Moses' arms and held his hands up for him. Thus were the enemy worn out with the battle and the Israelites conquered their foes.

Many strange things came to pass as the Israelites wandered to and fro in the wilderness seeking the Trail, and many pages of history were written during their search. But one of the greatest events of all history took place when God called Moses up to a mountaintop and trusted him with a message which was intended for the whole world.

God told Moses to tell the people where he

was going, but he wanted Moses to come to the mountaintop all alone. God said to him, "Thou shalt come up, but let not the priests nor the people come up."

So Moses went up alone to receive the message from God; and he stayed on the mountain with God forty days. But when he came down he had such a wonderful message that no one has ever been able to understand how he could take it all in, even in forty days.

But while Moses was gone a terrible thing happened in the camp at the foot of the mountain. The people did not know that he was going to stay so long, and they grew tired of waiting for his return. So they began to do wrong things, as Moses was not there to restrain them, and finally they went so far as to melt their rings and bracelets and earrings, and mold a calf of gold, such as they had seen among the heathen nations, and they sang and danced around this calf and then fell down and worshiped it.

When Moses turned to come down from the mountain where he had been talking with God, he carried in his arms two tablets of stone upon which he had engraved the messages which God had given him for the people to guide them throughout all the rest of their lives. There were ten of these messages and they were the very words of God—the Ten Commandments.

As Moses came down the mountain he heard the sound of singing and it did not sound like one

of Miriam's beautiful songs. As he drew nearer he discovered the dreadful truth—the people were having a heathen worship service around a golden calf.

In his astonishment and horror Moses cast from his hands the precious tablets of stone on which God's messages were graven, and they were broken to pieces in the sight of the very people for whom they were intended. It was not until the people had repented in bitter sorrow for this awful sin, and had tried to show their repentance by their deeds that God called Moses to come before him again to hear what he would say. This time there came a cloud over the Tent of Meeting in which the children of Israel worshiped the Lord, and the voice spoke to Moses saying,

"Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready by the morning, and come in the morning unto mount Sinai."

In the morning Moses went up again to the top of Mount Sinai as God had commanded, and there God gave him the words of the Ten Commandments again just as they had been at first. When Moses came down from the mountain his face shone with the light that came from talking with God, and all the people wondered at the glory in Moses' face. Aaron went out to meet

him, and Moses told Aaron the words on the tables of stone, and Aaron repeated them in the ears of the people. Thus were the Ten Commandments given to the world.

Through Moses and Aaron God taught the Israelites all the great laws of health and happiness and right living, how to worship before him, and how to do that which was well-pleasing in his sight.

But there came some sad days in the lives of Miriam and Aaron and Moses, the family whom God had trusted with so much of the leadership as the people sought to return to the Marked Trail—that is, to get back into the way which God intended them to follow.

Miriam died in the wilderness, before the people ever reached the land flowing with milk and honey which God had promised to them. But her songs had kept courage in the hearts of her people as they wandered. They never forgot her noble songs, nor the way she had cheered and comforted her comrades as they traveled through the rough places. They always cherished her memory, and Moses and Aaron grieved for her many days.

Although Aaron became the high priest of the wandering company, and was the head of the church, being chosen by God to lead the people in their worship, he did not live to enter the good land which God had promised to the children of Israel.

Aaron died on Mount Hor, not long after Miriam died, but the people never forgot to honor his memory. They remembered how he had come among them and ministered to them when a great pestilence broke out, and how he had risked his own life for their sakes, never forsaking them in the hour of danger; therefore his memory was sacred to them and to their children forever, for he had been a co-leader with Moses.

Not even Moses, the great leader himself, was permitted to enter the good and pleasant land which God had promised to his people. For one day Moses disobeyed God, and instead of doing as God commanded, did his own way instead; so Moses was denied the joy of entering the Promised Land. But one day the voice of God called Moses to come up to another mountain to talk with him. Moses had just finished writing a noble song, in which the history of the wanderings in the wilderness was told, when the voice of God called to him. Moses went up from the plain to Mount Nebo to meet with God. When he came there God showed him the Promised Land, which could be seen from the mountain top. There Moses saw rich valleys and sparkling streams, and palm trees and vineyards, and the splendid cities which should belong to the people whom he had led for forty years in their wanderings through the wilderness. And God said to Moses, "This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it

unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thy eyes."

And Moses was content not to go over himself, if the people whom he had served so faithfully might be permitted to enter in. But God honored Moses as no other man had ever been honored, for Moses never came down from the mountain. God took him to his heavenly home from the top of the mountain where he had looked into the Promised Land.

STUDY TOPICS

1. The story of how Aaron made the golden calf is told in Exod. 32. 1-6. The story of Moses breaking the tables of the law is told in Exod. 32. 15-20. The story of how Moses got the new tables of the law is told in Exod. 34. 1-8. Read as many of these stories as time will permit.
2. Review the Ten Commandments (brief form); committing them to memory:

1. Thou shalt have none other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt do no murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. **Thou shalt not steal.**
9. **Thou shalt not bear false witness.**
10. **Thou shalt not covet.**

3. Write out in your notebook the commandment which means most to you. Write your reason for this choice.

CHAPTER XVI

A BRAVE GENERAL

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given, as I spoke unto Moses. From the wilderness, and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border.

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt

have good success. Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The Lord God was speaking to the new general who was to take the responsibility of leading the great company, now that Moses, the matchless leader, was gone. As Joshua stood with bowed head and reverent heart, listening to the voice of God directing him to take up the great work as general of an army, he seemed to be in a dream. He had been born in Egypt during the years of bondage, and many a day had he worked with bare back under the scorching sun. He knew what it meant to hew rough stone from the quarries, and to make bricks without straw. He could remember the commands of the pitiless overseers in Egypt, for he had been growing into manhood when he had seen them as they struck the aching shoulders of the weary workmen. He had been one of those who had hurried out of the land at the command of Moses on that memorable Passover night.

He had been following Moses as he had led the children of Israel through the wilderness these forty years, and he knew something about the struggles and the courage of that great man. He had been one of the spies who had been trusted to go on an expedition into the new land, from which only he and Caleb had brought back a good re-

port. He had commanded the army when the Israelites had gone up against the enemies, and never once had he drawn back from danger or hardship. He had been faithful to Moses to the very end. All this must have passed through his memory that day when God called him to take Moses' place. The work he was to do would be different from that of Moses, for there were many battles to be fought in conquering the rich land which the Israelites were to enter, and Joshua was every inch a fearless soldier. God had watched over his actions up to this time, and he knew that Joshua was fitted for the work to which he was now called. Thus did Joshua become the new leader of the people who often wandered away from God and needed to return to the Marked Trail as true followers of Jehovah.

The first thing which he did when he took command was to issue orders to his officers. The officers carried the instructions to the people, bidding them to prepare food for a journey, for the general's orders were these, "Within three days ye are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you."

The company was arranged so that the strong fighting men took the lead, while the old men, the women and the children, and the helpless cattle were to be in the rear. They were to be quartered in a safe place until the soldiers should return with the news that the way was clear for

them to pass over the river. When the soldiers went to search out the way they met their first great problem. How were they to get the company across the river? There was no bridge, neither did they have any boats, but in some way the people must get over the Jordan. They went to Joshua with the problem, and they told him, "All that thou hast commanded us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go. Only be strong and of a good courage."

Then Joshua knew that he could depend upon them to follow his commands, and he was filled with renewed courage.

He sent spies over into the new land to find out if it was safe for him to bring the people over. They had a very exciting adventure, in which they came near being captured, but they finally returned and reported to Joshua that the whole land was afraid of him because they had heard of his great victories in the past.

So Joshua made plans to pass over the Jordan in the morning, for God had told him how it could be done. He said to the people, "To-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

His next command was astonishing, but the people never thought of disobeying. He said to the priests:

"Take up the ark of the covenant and pass over before the people. . . . Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you. . . . It shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that

bear the ark of the Lord, . . . shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off; . . . and they shall stand in one heap."

So the priests bearing the ark did just as Joshua commanded, and when they stepped into the river the waters were gathered in a heap to one side and the priests stood firm in the middle of the stream bed on dry ground. Then Joshua gave orders for the people to begin to march, and in a steady company about forty thousand of them passed over the river on the dry bed, until the company was landed safely on the other side. Then they had more faith in Joshua than they had ever had before, but Joshua told them to give all the glory to God, for it was by his power alone that this great thing had been accomplished. He commanded the priests to take twelve stones out of the middle of the stream and set them up on the bank of the river as a memorial to God of that great day.

His next move was to prepare to conquer the city of Jericho, for that was the first city which they were to possess. The soldiers were keen for a battle, and they felt confident of victory with Joshua as the commanding officer. What must have been their surprise when Joshua issued commands unlike any that had ever been given to any army before! He said that the city was to be conquered without any fighting! No swords nor spears were to be used. Only trumpets and the

steady tramp of feet; and in the end the sound of the human voice. These methods were to bring the great city into their possession.

The people of Jericho knew that the army of Joshua was near at hand, so they had shut their city gates and prepared themselves to resist a long siege.

Joshua issued his marching orders. The company was to be headed by seven priests carrying trumpets made of rams' horns, and they were to blow upon these trumpets all the time that they were marching. After them were to follow the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, and after them the great armed company.

"Make no sound with your voices," commanded Joshua, "until the day that I shall give the command. For six days you shall march around the city silently, with only the priests blowing upon the trumpets continually, but on the seventh day, you shall march around the city seven times, and the seventh time when the priests blow a loud blast upon the trumpets you shall shout aloud with a mighty shout, and the Lord will give you the city."

Although these were strange commands to be issued to an army, the whole company obeyed Joshua to the letter, and on the last day they assembled for the final test. Silently they marched about the city six times, but on the seventh circuit, when Joshua gave the command, the priests blew a mighty blast upon the trumpets,

the people shouted with a great shout, and the walls of the city fell down flat, and Joshua marched in with his victorious army and took possession in the name of the Lord who had given them the battle.

This was the beginning of a conquering campaign conducted under the leaders of Joshua's army. Battle after battle did he fight; victory after victory did he win; but one day he suffered an overwhelming defeat. Joshua knew there was something seriously wrong with his army, for God had promised him victory so long as he obeyed the divine commands.

So he set to work to try to find out the cause of his defeat. In conquering the city in the battle just before this God had given the command that Joshua's army was to take none of the spoils of their victory. When Joshua began his investigation of his soldiers he found that one of them had taken some of the silver and gold and fine raiment and had buried it under his tent to keep Joshua from seeing it. The stolen goods were dug up and destroyed, and the soldier paid the penalty for his disloyalty; then Joshua's army was victorious again. After this victory Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel. This altar was made of whole stones, and in it Joshua put a copy of the Ten Commandments as Moses had received them from God.

Once some kings tried to work a plot by pretending that they were poor men on a journey.

What they wanted to do was to get inside the lines of Joshua's army. They accomplished this much. They came into the camp dressed like tramps and carrying old water skins and moldy bread, as if they had been traveling a long distance; but they did not deceive Joshua, for he discovered who they were and what they were after, and he set them to work cutting wood and carrying water for his army, and kept them there.

Another time five kings hid in a cave, intending to come out upon Joshua unawares, and capture him, but Joshua found out that they were in there and ordered his soldiers to roll great stones in front of the entrance to the cave and shut the kings up there. He kept them captive in the cave until he had completely defeated their armies.

So Joshua conquered all the cities on the hills and in the valleys, all the land lying to the south and the precious springs of water there, and he took captive all the kings who defied him. Then he turned his army toward the north and they swept everything before them just as they had done in the south. It was said of Joshua, "He left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses."

STUDY TOPICS

1. Locate in the book of Joshua the command which God gave Joshua as quoted at the beginning of the lesson.

2. Recall how Moses had been leader of his people and tell of his final departure from them.
3. Find on the map the Jordan; also the Promised Land into which Joshua was to lead the people.
4. Tell the story of the crossing of the Jordan. What was the "ark of the covenant"?
5. Tell the story of the taking of the city of Jericho.

CHAPTER XVII

MAKING A PROMISE

A GREAT company was assembled at the place where Abraham had built his first altar unto the Lord. Here Jacob had consecrated his family to the Lord, and near by were buried the bones of Joseph, which had been brought up out of the land of Egypt as he had requested. It was indeed a spot filled with sacred memories for the children of Israel. They were gathered here this day at the invitation of one whom they honored and delighted to obey. Joshua had asked them to come. He had grown to a ripe old age among them, and he had called them here that he might remind them of some of the wonderful things which had come to pass since he had been their leader.

For some years Joshua had been living quietly, enjoying the peace and prosperity that had come to the people since they had returned to the Marked Trail as followers of Jehovah. After the war had ended, Joshua had carefully divided the Promised Land among the people who had fought so valiantly for its possession. Although he had been the general whose wisdom and courage had made it possible for them to gain such

victories, he did not claim a large portion for himself; he took only a small portion of the fertile land and there he and his family had lived in peace and quiet.

To-day he stood at Shechem, the place of holy memories—to make a last request of the people whom he had served so long and so faithfully. As they stood by the altar of the Lord they could look out over the rich land which was their own. As they looked at Joshua, the grand, old soldier, who stood before them, and realized all he had done for them, they felt that all that was said and done this day must be regarded as sacred.

Joshua began by reviewing their history, and they knew that he spoke the truth. Part of that history they had helped to make, part of it had been taught to them by their parents and grandparents, and by the story-tellers of that time. Their hearts were stirred with patriotic fire as Joshua reviewed their wonderful history to them. From time to time he would ask, "Do you remember this?" and they did remember. He took up the story of the Marked Trail: "Your forefathers used to live on the other side of the Euphrates River," he said. "Terah, the father of Abraham, lived there in Ur of the Chaldees, where they made images and worshiped idols. But God took Abraham out of that land and led him through the land of Canaan, and gave him a son whom he named Isaac. The sons of Isaac were

named Jacob and Esau, and the family of Jacob moved down into Egypt. After many years God sent Moses and Aaron to bring the people up out of Egypt, which had become the land of bondage for them. Your own fathers came out of Egypt in the company which Moses led when God helped them across the Red Sea, when the chariots of the Egyptians were lost in the same waters. For a long season your own families lived in the wilderness, and I, at last, became your leader and brought you into the land of the Amorites. There we fought for our lives and conquered the enemy, so that to-day this rich country belongs to you and to your children after you. We came across the Jordan and took the city of Jericho, and many another rich city did we take which is now your inheritance. Vineyards and olive yards which you did not plant you now enjoy, and you eat of the fruit of trees which you did not plant."

Joshua paused here. He wanted the people to think of the blessings and comforts which they now enjoyed because he had a special aim in view. He knew that there were those among that company of the chosen people of God who had been secretly worshiping idols, after the custom of some of the nations whom they had conquered. Joshua also knew that the time was not far off when he would be called to his heavenly home, and he yearned to have the people pledge their faith and loyalty to the Lord God in his hearing before he left them.

So Joshua took up his theme in which he had paused to give the people time to think!

"Now, therefore, fear the Lord," he begged them, "and serve him only, in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your forefathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt. Serve ye the Lord. And if you do not think it right that you should serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

When Joshua finished his address the people were all moved to answer him, for they knew he had earned the right to be obeyed during the years when he had so fearlessly led them at the direction of the Lord God. Then, too, the fact that he had kept so little of the rich land for himself made them believe in his sincerity and goodness. So they cried out in answer:

"God forbid that we should forsake him and serve other gods; for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went. Therefore we also will serve the Lord; for he is our God."

Although Joshua's heart was glad when the people declared themselves for God, he wanted to make sure that they really meant what they said, so he asked them, "Are you determined to be faithful and true to this promise? Remember,

that God wants only those promises which are faithful and true, and those who serve him truly must put away all other gods. Are you strong enough to do this?"

And the people replied: "We are witnesses against ourselves that we have chosen the Lord to serve him. The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

Then, that the promise might be recorded in history, Joshua caused the account of this great meeting to be written in a book in the law of God, and to be kept as a record of the promises of the people.

After the record had been made he set up a great stone as an added mark to this place in the Trail, where the people had pledged their loyalty to God. All the days of Joshua, the people served the Lord.

Study Topics

1. On the map locate Shechem. Locate also the Euphrates River.
2. Recall from the past lessons the events about which Joshua told his people: How God called Abraham out to a new land; the story of Jacob and Esau; how the Israelites came to go into Egypt; how they were led out from there; how they came to the Promised Land.
3. Explain the meaning of each of the various

references in the following hymn. Memorize the first two stanzas:

1. Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
   Pilgrim through this barren land;
   I am weak, but thou art mighty;
   Hold me with thy powerful hand.

2. Open now the crystal fountain,
   Whence the healing waters flow;
   Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
   Lead me all my journey through.

3. Feed me with the heavenly manna
   In this barren wilderness;
   Be my sword and shield and banner,
   Be the Lord my righteousness.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WOMAN WHO HELPED

"Let us go to the council seat under the palm tree. If we can find the good prophetess, she will listen to our story and try to help us. How long can we stand the cruel attacks of these cowardly foes? When it comes to shooting their poisoned arrows at helpless maidens at the fountain in the evening there is no way to tell how it will end! To think that we alone remain of all the maidens who went out to the fountain yesterday! I dare not go again, and perhaps we shall perish of thirst, for we can draw no water at the fountain for fear of our very lives."

"But it is not upon us alone that this great cruelty is visited. Have you not heard how they have wounded and killed the old men and the feeble women, and even the little innocent children? There is nothing too cruel for the cowardly Sisera. He has shot down the helpless old people in the streets, and by his command all the property of our neighbors and friends has been taken from them."

"If we had ever done them any wrong, we might be able to bear it, but the only reason for this is that the powerful enemies have us in their power and glory in our terror and suffering."

"My father says that it is no longer safe for our strongest men to go about the streets on their daily business, but they must hunt the winding byways among the thick shrubs for fear of the arrows of the enemy. Would that we might find relief!"

Thus two maidens talked together as they cautiously picked their way toward the council seat under the palm tree.

Deborah, the wise counselor and judge, sat under the palm tree daily, giving comfort to the sorrowing, succor to the needy, counsel to the troubled, and love and sympathy and friendship to all who came her way. The fame of Deborah had spread throughout all the surrounding country, and caravans and pilgrims might be seen daily going to and from the council seat. Deborah had a beautiful home of her own, with orchards and vineyards and olive trees, but she denied herself the luxury and comfort of her own home on many days, when she came to the council seat, that she might minister to those who passed on their way to and from the great trading cities of that region. God had given Deborah the power to help others, and great wisdom to read beforehand the meanings in the affairs of men. None came to her in vain, but all went away strengthened and encouraged and comforted.

Rumors had come to Deborah from time to time that the cruel captain Sisera, sent by King Jabin into their cities, had been guilty of perse-

cuting the helpless and the weak. But she did not know it all until the frightened maidens, whose companions had been slain at the fountain, finally made their way to her council seat. Then the heart of Deborah glowed with hot indignation against Sisera and against Jabin, king of Canaan, and she determined that they should be punished for their evil deeds.

She sent for Barak, a soldier who had done some fighting in other days, to appeal to him to raise an army and go against Sisera and bring him to the dust. Barak came in answer to her summons, and Deborah told him the story, then she said, "Hath not the Lord God given this command unto thee through me? Go, gather together ten thousand men from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. Fight with this cruel Sisera, the captain of King Jabin's army, with his horses and his chariots and his multitude, and the Lord will give you the victory."

To Deborah's amazement and disgust Barak stood rooted to the spot, hesitating and afraid. He challenged Deborah to prove that she believed that God would give the victory to the Israelites. "If you will go with me," he said, "then I will go, but if you will not go with me then I will not go."

It did not take one moment for Deborah to decide. "I will go with you," she said, but in her heart she despised Barak's cowardice.

She went with him to the place where they were

to assemble the army, confident that the Lord was on her side and would help her. They finally got together ten thousand infantry soldiers, who were as nothing compared with Sisera's famous army.

One of the Israelites proved a traitor and slipped away to Sisera and told him that Deborah and Barak were gathering an army to come up against him. Immediately Sisera called out his forces. He had nine hundred chariots of iron in addition to infantry and cavalry in great numbers.

When Barak saw this great army approaching with the chariots gleaming in the sun he was filled with terror and wanted to go back home without fighting or else run to the mountains for safety, and hide among the trees. But Deborah scorned to turn back or to flee. "Up," she cried to Barak, "for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hands: is not the Lord gone out before thee?"

And Barak's cowardice gave way before Deborah's fiery courage, and he shouted to his men, for at last he felt assured that the Lord was leading his army.

Down from the mountain rushed the ten thousand foot soldiers in a mighty charge all together, and Sisera, suddenly overcome with terror at the sight of them descending upon him, turned and fled, and his soldiers fled after him. This put renewed courage into the hearts of Barak's men

and they pursued Sisera's men, fighting with the edge of the sword until the army was completely routed.

The chariots were abandoned and their drivers fled for their lives, and Sisera outdistanced all the others in his efforts to escape. As he fled, he turned in for refuge at the tent of the traitor who had told him of Barak's approach, and there he met with a strange and terrible fate.

When Deborah realized that the Lord had given her people the victory, and that at last the helpless sufferers were to be delivered from their tormentors, she sang a song of triumph, almost as famous as that which Miriam sang, when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. This song became a part of the history of the followers of the Marked Trail.

Then Deborah returned to her own home and continued to go to the council seat under the palm tree, that she might help and advise and comfort the people in the name of the Lord. The council seat became as a guide post on the Trail, and the land had rest and peace for many years.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Find in Judges 4 and 5 the story of how the wicked Sisera oppressed the people of Israel.
2. Tell how Deborah busied herself helping

her people. What finally decided her that the army of Israel must punish Sisera?

3. Why do you think Deborah was so confident the Israelite army would be victorious?
4. Tell of the combat and its outcome.
5. This is a part of Deborah's song. Read it over several times as you think of the joy and gratitude in her heart for what God had done for her people:

"Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord;
I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.
My heart is toward the governors of Israel,
That offered themselves willingly among the people:
Bless ye the Lord."

CHAPTER XIX

A DARING MESSENGER

THE summer palace was gay with flowers, sparkling fountains, and singing birds. Attendants dressed in robes of softest silk and cloth of brilliant colors waited breathlessly the slightest nod or gesture from the haughty queen in her royal raiment, sitting upon her glittering throne. By her side sat the king, wearing his crown, it is true, and holding the scepter in his hand, but he had no power in the kingdom to compare with that of the scornful woman who sat by him, and who ruled him as she ruled his subjects.

This man belonged to the line of the kings of Israel, a nation whose God was Jehovah, but the queen had come out of a heathen nation, whose customs she continued to follow in the land where the people were pledged to worship the true and living God. She had persuaded her weak and willing husband, the king, to set up altars where idols of wood and stone might be worshiped and where the people might carry on the worship of her native country, where the inhabitants worshiped the sun as a god. She also influenced him to break down the altars that had been erected to the true and living God, and to set up

the heathen worship as the religion of the royal house. At her own expense she supported a household of priests to conduct this heathen worship, and four hundred and fifty of them sat down to eat every day at the royal table.

This powerful woman was named Jezebel, and her husband was King Ahab, a descendant of one of those Israelites who had come up into the Promised Land under the leadership of Moses and Joshua.

Jezebel rejoiced in her power over King Ahab, and more than anything else in the world enjoyed making him follow her commands. As she sat on her throne in the summer palace wearing her bracelets and necklaces and rings, and basking in all the luxury which was provided for her, she must have smiled to herself at the thought of how she had succeeded in establishing the worship of Baal in that land; and of how she had at last driven all of the prophets of God out of the kingdom, until they were forced to find homes in the caves in the deserts, not daring to prophesy in the kingdom over which she held such absolute control.

Suddenly, without a word of warning, a strange-looking man with a garment of wool thrown about him and a stout staff in his hand burst into the throne room and faced the king and queen. This was an unheard-of thing! he had not stopped to ask permission to enter the royal presence, but had come in boldly, never troubling

himself to kneel before their thrones and touch his forehead to the ground, waiting for their consent to listen to his message. With his eyes glowing like fire and his long, thick hair tossed back by the swift gesture of his head, he cried in a voice of command,

"As the Lord, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

The king and queen were too astonished to speak. At last Jezebel recovered from her speechless rage enough to open her lips and command her guards to throw him into a dungeon. But the fearless messenger had vanished as mysteriously as he had appeared, and for once the haughty queen found herself baffled. Ahab sat shaking with terror. Although he had been weakly led about by the queen and had carried out her wicked demands, nevertheless, down in his heart he still feared the God of his fathers and desired to worship him. Ahab realized the awful meaning of the words to which they had just listened more fully than Jezebel did, for he knew who this terrible, fearless man was. Ahab knew that a prophet of God had dared to come into their presence and that the message which he delivered was from God himself. Therefore Ahab trembled and feared because they had seen Elijah, the prophet, that day.

Jezebel feared because she knew the meaning of years of drought. What would happen to her

gay palace life if there should be no dew nor rain in the land? With all her arrogance she had sense enough to know that she could not make it rain. Down in her wicked heart she knew that there was a power which neither she nor her four hundred and fifty priests of Baal could control. But her rage mastered her and she turned on Ahab and blazed out, "Command thy soldiers to go and find this man! I will slay him with my own hands for his cruel message!"

And Ahab, not daring to disobey Jezebel, especially when she was angry, sent soldiers everywhere, even to the uttermost parts of the kingdom, but no trace of the prophet of God could be found.

In the meantime, far off in a ravine, among the mountains, where thick shrubs clustered around a sparkling brook whose cool waters trickled over the rocks, Elijah, the prophet of God, was safe and secure, living the outdoor life which he understood and loved. It was in obedience to the direction of God that Elijah had come back to the mountains where he was living when he took the message to the palace. Here by the brook Cherith God had told Elijah that he should not suffer from hunger nor thirst, for by his own power God would provide for him food and drink as long as he remained there in obedience to God's command. Even if Ahab's soldiers had come that way trying to find him, there were many secret places among the rocks and caves

known to Elijah, where they would never think of suspecting that he was hidden.

So Elijah stayed there in the mountains, and God took care of him. But, at last, even the sparkling brook Cherith began to show the effect of the drought. There had been no rain to feed it for a long time, and the rocks were dry and parched in the constant sun. The little brook began to dry up, but Elijah stayed on as God had commanded. One day God gave him the command to leave the mountain fastnesses and go into the city. "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee," was the command God gave Elijah.

At once Elijah rose and started toward Zarephath. He knew that the people of that town did not worship the true and living God, but he was sure God had a reason for sending him into a heathen country, and he was not afraid to go. When he came near the city gates he saw a woman outside the gates gathering some sticks to make a fire. He called to her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." She started off to get the water for him, and he called after her, "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand."

The woman knew as soon as she looked at Elijah that he was a prophet of God, and when she answered him she used words that proved this, for she said, "As the Lord, thy God, liveth,

I have not a cake, and there is only a handful of meal in the jar, and very little oil in the cruse. I was gathering these sticks for a fire, that I might make this into bread for my son and me, and after that we must die of hunger."

But Elijah answered:

"Fear not; go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth to me, and afterward make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth."

Although the woman belonged to a heathen nation, she believed Elijah's words, therefore she went in and made the cake and brought it out to him with the water. As Elijah had promised, she and her son had food for many days from her store of meal and oil, and the prophet lived in the house with them.

The soldiers of Ahab never thought of coming to Zarephath as they kept up their search for Elijah, for it never occurred to them that the prophet of God would be in a heathen city. How amazed they would have been if they had known that he was right where they could have captured him at any moment!

One day Elijah had it in his power to do the greatest service for the widow of Zarephath that she could have asked of him. He saved her only

son's life. After this the woman ceased to worship the heathen gods, and said to Elijah, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Then Elijah understood why God had sent him into a heathen country during the drought.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Read the part of this story that is found in 1 Kings 17.
2. Who was the queen? who the king? Of what religion was the queen? What measures did she take to have her own religion advanced among the people?
3. Who was Elijah? What was the message God gave him to deliver to the king and queen?
4. What did Jezebel order done to avenge herself on Elijah? Where had Elijah gone? Can you locate on the map the brook where Elijah lived?
5. Where did Elijah go to live after the brook began to dry up? Tell the story of the widow's supply of meal. In what other way did Elijah repay her for her kindness?

CHAPTER XX

A TEST ON A MOUNTAIN

"Let us go through the whole land and see if we can find any fountains or springs of water. It may be there is some sheltered place where we have not yet searched where we can find enough for the suffering cattle, and horses and mules, and we can lead them there and save their lives. They will surely all die unless we soon find food and drink for them. You take one side of the land and I will take the other, and we will not give up until we have looked over the whole land."

Could this be the former lofty king of Israel, consulting so anxiously with one of his servants as he tried to find food and drink for the starving animals? Was this the same man who had been accustomed to sit upon a golden throne in an ivory palace, obeying the whims of an exacting heathen queen?

It was indeed King Ahab, out with his overseer, Obadiah, trying to plan some way to save the animals from death. For three years there had been no rain nor dew and the famine had been sore in the land. Things were very different in Ahab's palace from the way they had been on

that summer day when the prophet of God had burst in upon them with his awful message. And all that he had prophesied had come to pass, and as the days went by Jezebel hated him more and more, and grew angrier each time that Ahab's soldiers returned with news that they could not find him in the kingdom. The royal power had failed as completely here, as it had in bringing rain or dew upon the earth.

So Obadiah started off in the direction appointed by Ahab, not knowing what an astonishing adventure was before him. On the road down which he traveled, something happened which put all thought of Ahab's commission out of his mind. As suddenly as he had appeared in the palace three years before, Elijah stood in the road in front of Obadiah. In terror Obadiah sprang down from his chariot and fell upon his face at the feet of the prophet. "Is it thou, my lord Elijah?" he cried, trembling.

"It is I," calmly answered Elijah, "and thou shalt go to thy master, Ahab, and tell him that Elijah is here."

But Obadiah was afraid to carry any such message as that. He had been present when some of the messengers had returned after searching for Elijah with the report that he could not be found, and he had seen them put to death by the command of Jezebel in her rage at their failure. How could he know that Elijah would not disappear before Ahab could get there? If

he should not be there when Ahab came, Obadiah was sure that his own life would not be worth a straw if the news ever got to Jezebel. So he begged Elijah not to send him.

"There is no nation nor kingdom whither my master hath not sent to seek thee," said Obadiah, "and when they returned saying thou couldst not be found he was merciless to them, and now thou sayest, 'Go tell thy master, Behold, Elijah is here.' And it will come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee that the spirit of Jehovah will carry thee whither I know not: and so when I come up and tell Ahab and he cannot find thee he will slay me."

But Elijah promised, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him this day."

Then Obadiah started off to carry the message to Ahab, and the prophet was left alone. Elijah was not afraid to meet Ahab, for he had come to this place in obedience to the command of the Lord God. God had told him to leave the widow's house and go before Ahab with a message as he had done the day that he appeared so suddenly in the palace. God had never failed him yet, and he trusted him now. While Elijah was standing in the road thinking about the mission he had to carry out, he looked up and saw Ahab coming swiftly toward him. Fear and anger were written on Ahab's face, and he called out, "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?"

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ELIJAH MEETING AHAB

Fearlessly Elijah answered him, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy family have brought all this trouble upon the land. Thou hast forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed idols. Now, therefore, send, gather all Israel together on Mount Carmel and bring there the four hundred and fifty prophets that eat at Jezebel's table, and see what shall come to pass."

Ahab dared not disobey Elijah, for he knew that this command was from Jehovah. Therefore he sent out messengers and gathered all the people of Israel and the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal at Mount Carmel, there to meet Elijah.

When they were all assembled, Elijah spoke, "How long," said he, "will you go about halting between two sides? If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal be your god then follow him." But not one spoke in answer to Elijah's question. Then he challenged them: "I am here alone," he said, "the only prophet of God among you. All the rest are prophets of Baal. There are four hundred and fifty of them present. Let us try a test between us. We will take two bullocks, and each side will choose one animal; first the priests of Baal shall prepare meat and lay it upon wood and put no fire under. Then I will take the other and prepare the meat and lay it on the wood and put no fire under. First, let them call upon their god; then I will call upon the name of the Lord:

and the God that answereth by fire, let him be your God."

At this the people answered Elijah and said, "It is well spoken." Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "There are many of you; call upon your god first."

The prophets of Baal prepared their meat and put it on the wood and put no fire under, and began calling upon the name of their god. From morning until noon they cried, "O Baal, hear us!" but there was no answering fire. All afternoon their cries rang out louder and louder, and finally they whirled about the altar wildly and cut themselves with knives in their frenzy, shrieking vainly, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!"

At last Elijah said, "He may be asleep, or gone on a journey, or he may be thinking about something else. Cry aloud to him, for he is your god."

This only made them cry more loudly, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!"

The afternoon wore into evening and the time for sunset had come, and no fire came down upon the bullock of the priests of Baal.

Then came Elijah's turn. He told the people to come near enough to see everything he did so they could be sure that no trick was being played. First he repaired the altar of Jehovah which had been broken down at Jezebel's command. He put back the twelve stones which stood for the memorial to God's goodness to the twelve tribes of Israel; then he dug a trench around the altar

deep enough to hold much water, and after this he placed the wood in order, and prepared the meat to lay upon the wood. Then he said to some of the people who stood near, "Fill four jars with water and pour it over the meat and the wood." They obeyed him. "Do it a second time," he commanded. Again they obeyed him. "Do it a third time," he said, and when they did it the third time the water ran down over the sides of the altar and into the trench and the whole place was drenched. Then Elijah mounted to the place of the altar while all the multitude gazed in silence.

Elijah prayed:

"O Lord, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Lord, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

Then Elijah stood silent. Instantly the fire came down in a streak from the heavens, the fire from Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts. It consumed the meat, the wood, the stone, and the dust, and licked up all the water in the trench.

The people were overcome with awe and they fell upon the ground and bowed their faces in the dust crying out, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God."

Then Elijah turned to Ahab and said, "Get

thee up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain."

Elijah stood on Mount Carmel with his young servant, and prayed to God to send the rain quickly. From time to time he lifted his face from the ground and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea," hoping that he would come back with news of the approaching rain. But the servant took six trips to the western side of the mountain and brought no tidings of rain. Finally on the seventh trip he saw a tiny cloud on the horizon, and he returned to Elijah and said, "Behold, there ariseth a cloud out of the sea, as small as a man's hand." At this Elijah cried, "Go tell Ahab to make ready his chariot and get to the city before the rain overtakes him!"

While the servant was going with this message the wind began to blow, and the clouds spread over the sky, and Elijah girded his robe about him and began to run to a place of safety. He passed Ahab on the way, driving furiously in his chariot, but on and on he ran, outdistancing the horses for fifteen miles and he reached the city gates ahead of Ahab.

Study Topics

1. How long a time had elapsed since Elijah had warned of the drought? How were the people in Ahab's kingdom faring by this time?

2. Where had Elijah been all this time? Describe the meeting of Elijah and Obadiah.
3. What test did Elijah propose to decide whether the people should serve Baal or Jehovah?
4. Describe the carrying out of the test between Elijah and the priests of Baal.
5. Do you think that Elijah with his high courage helped mark out the Trail which we should follow? What other qualities besides courage do you especially admire about him?
6. Write out in your own words what you think was the reason for Elijah's triumph on Mount Carmel.

CHAPTER XXI

FOLLOWING A GREAT LEADER

A YOUNG man was plowing in one of his father's fields. With the greatest ease and skill he guided the twelve yoke of oxen which were hitched to the plow, for he was strong and active, and trained to the task which he was doing. As he walked up and down between the furrows he might have looked over the vast stretch of fertile land, and dreamed of what he would do to improve it when it became all his own, for he knew well enough that he would one day inherit his father's wealth. He had many friends, for he was a friendly young man, and his father's house was noted for its hospitality.

Down the road came a man past middle life but with a look of strength and vigor which proved him to be an outdoor person. He wore a garment made of the skins of animals and around his waist was a leather girdle. On his arm he carried an extra cloak made of skins. He came into the field where the young man was plowing and, walking up to him, threw the extra cloak around the young farmer's shoulders. That was enough, the plowman understood; he had been called to follow the great man who had honored him by

entering his father's field. He understood as well as if the stranger had said: "I am about to lay down my work as the prophet of God; you are to take my place; come with me and learn the way of the prophet."

The young man had much to leave if he should obey this silent summons. Parents, home, friends, riches, popularity must be exchanged for a life of danger, and ministry to others, and study in the school of the prophets. Could he make the exchange? But the young man did not hesitate. He only said, "I will go home and kiss my father and my mother and tell my friends good-by and then I will come after thee."

Thus was Elisha chosen to go with Elijah and learn the way of the prophets.

Many years did Elijah and Elisha live together, and each day Elisha learned more about the duties of a prophet of God.

At the end of ten years Elijah said to Elisha one day, "I am going on a journey to Bethel, for God hath sent me there."

"I will go with you," said Elisha, for Elijah was growing old and Elisha did not want him to take such a long journey alone. So Elisha walked by the side of Elijah, on beyond Bethel, for Elijah decided to go on to Jericho, and down to the banks of the Jordan River. When they came to the ford of the river, Elijah took off the prophet's mantle which he always wore, and wrapped it together and struck the waters with it.

At once the waters parted as they had done when the children of Israel crossed this stream so many years before, and Elijah and Elisha walked through the stream bed on dry ground. When they came to the opposite bank Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee." And Elisha said, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." This was as if Elisha had asked that he should be able to do the work of the prophet in the same noble spirit in which Elijah had performed his work.

Elijah's answer was something like this: "You will be able to do it if you will remember me after my presence is taken from your sight."

While they stood talking a beautiful thing came to pass. There appeared in the sky above them a chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the chariot and was carried into heaven, and as Elisha saw it he cried, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

The mantle of Elijah fell from his shoulders as the chariot mounted into heaven, and Elisha picked it up and walked slowly back to the ford of the river.

As he stood by the Jordan holding the mantle on his arm Elisha prayed aloud to Jehovah and asked that the blessing might rest upon him, even as it had rested upon Elijah all the days of his life. He was compelled to cross the river to get back home, so Elisha wrapped the mantle to-

gether and struck the waters as Elijah had done when they crossed over, and at once the waters parted, and Elisha passed through the river on dry ground on his way home. By this sign Elisha knew that he was to go forward with the work of Elijah, performing great deeds as he had done in the strength of the Lord. Thus Elisha became the prophet in Elijah's stead.

"How I wish that our master could go to the prophet of God who lives in my native land! Then I think he could be cured of the disease which is destroying him. The prophet has done so many wonderful deeds that the whole country rings with his fame. O if my master would only go to him!"

All this was being said by a little Hebrew maiden who had been carried away captive into Syria, when the Syrian army had conquered the army of Israel. She had been treated kindly in the home where she had been sent to serve, and she loved her master, Naaman, a captain of the Syrian army, because he had been very kind to her. As she had lived in Naaman's family she had learned of the great sorrow that kept her mistress sad at heart. It was because Naaman had a disease called leprosy which no doctor could cure.

The maid had seen some of the wonderful cures wrought by Elisha, the prophet in Israel, through the power of God, and she longed to have her

master go to the prophet. When Naaman's wife told of what the little maid had said, news of it came to the ears of the king of Syria. Now the king loved Naaman and valued him as a soldier, so he decided at once to send Naaman into Samaria to try the remedy at the hands of the prophet. He wrote a letter to the king in Samaria, whose name was Jehoram, telling him why Naaman was coming and asking that he be cured.

When Jehoram read the letter he wrung his hands and moaned. He forgot all about the prophet of God in Samaria, and thought that he was expected to cure Naaman himself, for the letter read, "I have sent Naaman, my servant, to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

Jehoram cried out in despair, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" In fact, Jehoram thought it was just a plot on the part of Benhadad, king of Syria, to start a quarrel which would grow into a war, for Benhadad was much more powerful than Jehoram.

Elisha, who was sitting quietly in his house, heard how the king was acting, and that he was overcome with terror at the strange letter which he had received. Then Elisha sent this message to King Jehoram, "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

When Naaman arrived in Samaria it was a splendid sight to see. He had horses and chari-

ots, attendants and soldiers in his train, for the king had sent him off in great state as one of his favorites should be equipped. He was directed to go to Elisha's house. Perhaps he thought it would be a splendid mansion such as he imagined a great man should live in, but if he did think this, he was disappointed, for Elisha lived very modestly in a plain house of his own. Naaman drove up to the door and called for the prophet, but Elisha, instead of coming out to meet Naaman himself, sent one of his messengers with these directions for Naaman, "Go and wash in the river Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again to you and you shall be healed."

Naaman was indignant. As he was a man of such importance in his own country, a favorite of the king himself, he had expected that the prophet would come out to him saying mysterious words and laying his hands upon him to perform the miracle of healing. Instead of all this he had simply sent a messenger, saying, "Go wash in the Jordan seven times." Naaman felt that he had not been treated with the proper respect, and he turned to his attendants and said: "Behold, I thought he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of Jehovah, his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers in my own land, better than all the rivers in this land? I could wash in them and be cleansed." And Naaman turned around and was

going home. But his servants loved him and could not bear to have him give up this chance to be cured, so they begged him to try it. They said, "If the prophet had told thee to do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? Why not then do the simple thing which he has directed thee to do?"

Naaman was pleased that his own servants cared so much about his cure, so he let them persuade him to try the Jordan River. They went down with him to the water's edge. Six times did Naaman dip in the river and nothing happened, but when he went down the seventh time his flesh became as fair and clean as a child's, and he was completely cured of his leprosy.

With all his splendid procession he turned and went back to the house of the prophet. This time he got down from his chariot and went in to the prophet and said, "Behold now I know that there is no God in all the earth but the God thou dost serve, now, therefore, I pray thee, take a present from thy servant in return for this wonderful cure."

But Elisha did not do his deeds of kindness hoping to receive presents in return, for he was a prophet of God, and gave God the glory. All that he wanted was that those whom he helped should love and honor Jehovah. So he said to Naaman, "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive nothing." And Naaman went on his way homeward rejoicing and think-

ing gratefully of the little captive maid who had returned his kindness so wonderfully.

Study Topics

1. Locate on the map the country of Syria; locate Samaria; Dothan.
2. Tell in review the story of how Elisha came to succeed Elijah as prophet.

CHAPTER XXII

A WONDERFUL ALLY

BENHADAD, the king of Syria, was sitting in his palace troubled and perplexed. Strange things which he could not understand were taking place in his army. He was forced to believe that there was a traitor in the ranks, but, so far, he had not succeeded in finding out who the traitor was, and his plans continued to be revealed to the enemy. He always failed when he was just on the point of gaining a victory. He had called a council of his officers in the army to talk this over.

"Some one in the army is false to our side," he said to the council, "for every plan of attack which we undertake is made known to the king of Israel, and he outwits us cunningly. Search among the army and find the traitor, and bring him before me that he may meet with his just fate."

But one of Benhadad's chief officers told such an astonishing thing in the council that the king of Syria knew not which way to turn, for the officer explained it in this way: "O king," he said, "there is no traitor among us, and for that we may be glad; but a stranger thing than that happens when the king of Israel learns our plans.

It is some one in Israel who causes our constant defeats."

"Some one in Israel!" cried Benhadad. "How could any one in Israel know the plans which we work out secretly in the council chamber?"

"That we cannot explain, O king," answered the officer, "but this is certain, there is a man in Israel who has the power to learn whatever he wishes to know, and even the secret thoughts of this council are not hidden from him."

"What is his name, and where may he be found?" inquired the king.

"It is none other, O king, than the prophet who cured our captain, Naaman, of his leprosy. His name is Elisha, and he is a man of God. He it is who is able to turn aside all our plans and to reveal to the king of Israel all that he desires to know."

"Prophet or no prophet!" cried Benhadad, "he must be put out of our way at once! The next attack we make shall be against him, and when we have killed him, we can go on to victory, for our army is greater than theirs. This very night we will gather our army and go down and compass the city near the place where his house is. In the morning we will capture him, and the king of Israel will have no more plans of ours revealed to him. Send out spies at once, to find out exactly where he is, in order that we may choose a good position for our army."

So the spies were sent out, and returned in a

short time, reporting that Elisha, the man of God, was in Dothan, the city of the two wells, twelve miles from the city of Samaria, where they had expected to find him.

Benhadad gave orders that the army should be assembled, horses and chariots, and a great company of soldiers, to make the attack upon Elisha. The army moved quietly by night and took up its position around the walls of Dothan at the foot of the hill. There they waited for the morning, to seize Elisha.

Early in the morning, according to his habit, Elisha's servant rose and began attending to the affairs of the household. What a sight met his eyes! There, encamped around the city, was a great army of Syrians, guarding the gates to make sure that no one escaped. In terror the servant ran in to Elisha.

"Alas, my master," he cried, "what shall we do?" And Elisha answered with calmness, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

The servant could not understand this, for he knew that he and Elisha were the only ones in the house, and he did not know where they were to turn for helpers. How could they withstand all these chariots and horsemen and soldiers? But Elisha knew that so long as God was on his side he had nothing to fear. Elisha had seen a company which was invisible to the servant. Now he asked God to let the servant see it also.

"Jehovah," prayed Elisha, "I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see."

And God gave the young servant power to see what Elisha had been seeing.

Behold the mountain above them was full of chariots of fire which were put round about Elisha to protect him.

Elisha rose and passed right out of the city gate and walked toward the army of Benhadad, and as he walked he prayed to God for help. But by the time he reached the army, every Syrian soldier had been dazzled into blindness by the great light from the mountaintop. They did not know who it was that came into their midst. The stranger said, "This is not the city which you seek. Follow me and I will take you to the place where you should go, and you shall find the man whom you seek."

The soldiers followed him, stumbling along the way, and he led them straight to the city of Samaria, where the king of Israel was quartered with his army. Then Elisha prayed, "Lord, open their eyes, that they may see."

And God restored their sight to them, and behold they were in the city of Samaria, completely in the power of Jehoram, king of Israel, and there stood Elisha, the man of God whom they had planned to capture!

Jehoram was filled with triumph and he turned to Elisha and cried out, "Shall I smite them, my father, shall I smite them?"

But Elisha replied, "Would you injure people who are helpless and in your power? Would you use a bow or a sword on a captured foe? Set bread and water before them, let them eat and drink, then send them back to their own country unharmed."

And Jehoram obeyed the man of God. He prepared food for the great army and then he sent them home.

Thus the host which had gone out prepared to capture the prophet, returned home without him, and left him unharmed in Samaria, and their hearts were filled with gratitude for what he had done for them, in returning good for evil.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Memorize at least three statements from these beautiful words which might have comforted Elisha—where are these words found?

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and fortress;
My God, in whom I trust.
Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,

Nor for the destruction that wasteth at
noonday.
For thou, O Lord, art my refuge!
For he shall give his angels charge over
thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
He shall call upon me, and I will answer
him;
I will be with him in trouble:
I will deliver him, and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him my salvation."

2. Read carefully this promise which Elisha proved to be true:

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round
about them that fear him,
And delivereth them.
Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
Many are the afflictions of the righteous;
But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.
The Lord redeemeth the soul of his
servants;
And none of them that trust in him shall
be condemned."

3. Imagine yourself the captive maid in Naaman's household and tell what you would have said to Naaman's wife.
4. Describe how Naaman finally was cured.

CHAPTER XXIII

A DANGER SIGNAL ON THE TRAIL

Amos, the wool-trader, was walking along the rugged road which led from the city of Jerusalem to his home in the hills of Tekoa. Twelve miles was no walk for Amos, the shepherd of the hills; distance and rough travel meant nothing to a man accustomed to the out-of-door life which he led in all kinds of weather the whole year round. Many a night he had stayed on the bleak hills, listening to the howling of the wolves, and the whistling of the wind, as he held his stout club in his hand ready to protect his helpless sheep against the prowling wild beasts.

When the season came round he sheared the wool from the backs of the sheep and took it off to the markets in the cities to sell or to trade. Many other traders from distant regions came to the markets where Amos traded, and he heard the news of the outside world in the trading season. Every market town in the whole region was familiar to Amos, and he was a much-traveled man for a shepherd who lived in the hill country.

When he came home after a trading journey and took up the custom of watching his flocks by night, he had a great deal to think about as he sat through the quiet hours alone save for the

company of his sheep and the stars which shone above him. Living in that rugged land where danger lurked in the cayes and rocks because of the wild beasts, Amos grew into the habit of watching and listening and scenting danger before it came upon him, therefore he was prepared beforehand to fight away the threatened harm to his flocks. He counted his own life as nothing when it came to risking it for his sheep. In fact, Amos did not know the meaning of fear.

When he went up to the markets his trained eyes took in much that might have escaped a less watchful man, and his keen ears listened to the stories which were told around him and took in every word.

This day as he trudged along the road he was remembering some of the things which he had heard on this trip. He had seen some things also the pictures of which stayed in his mind. He remembered stone palaces, with walls of the finest woods inlaid with ivory; soft couches, upon which the people reclined, resting on cushions made of the soft wool which he sold there; rich feasts being served to those who reclined upon the couches; bowls of costly wines sparkling in the light; gay music from the tabret and harp, played by the chief musicians, stationed under the spreading palm trees in the gardens; women dressed in magnificent garments and strung with jewels; joy, mirth, wealth, luxury. Surely, the memory of all this was enough to dazzle a simple shepherd

and make him long to have these things also! Why, then, should Amos frown and look so stern as he walked back to Tekoa? He had seen only ease and comfort and merriment, and they should have made him gay.

But Amos had seen other things as he had journeyed to the cities, and the pictures that he saw in his mind as he remembered these were different indeed. He had seen the poor struggling to pay debts too heavy for them to meet, children crying for bread when there was none to give them, judges reaching out their hands for bribes instead of rendering justice, the strong oppressing the weak; he had seen cruelty and want; and all this in the very shadow of the luxurious palaces.

Moreover, Amos had seen the people worshiping idols, and he was a follower of the Lord God of Israel. He knew by all these signs that the very people who owed everything they had to the Lord were forsaking him in the midst of their prosperity. By the time he reached home his heart was heavy and his head was bowed in sorrow at his memories.

One day not long after this as he followed his flocks on the hills the voice of God called to Amos, saying, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel." Amos knew that very moment that his days of sheep trading were over. From that time forth, the rest of his life, God gave him words to speak to the nation that was drifting into sin.

The rich were sunning themselves in the gardens of their summer palaces. The poor were toiling in the heat under heavy burdens. The women in the royal courts were dressed in fine silks, and linens and embroideries. Delicate perfumes were wafted on the air when they passed. The poor were dressed in rags, walking barefoot along the burning roads. As the poor women passed them, the rich drew aside their skirts lest they should be touched by the others and the poor cowered against the walls to make room for the rich to pass. The judges were sitting in the courts, dealing out injustice to the poor and giving out judgments in favor of the rich. Even some of the prophets were saying words which were well-pleasing to the rich, forgetting the very existence of the poor. It seemed as if the whole world had turned away from God.

Suddenly there appeared in Samaria a man from the hills, proclaiming:

"The Lord shall roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."

The people were filled with anger and amazement and would have destroyed this new prophet if they had dared, but he was no more afraid of them than he had been of the prowling beasts on the hills, so he continued:

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to

them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come! . . . That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock; . . . that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; . . . that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments. . . . For, behold, the Lord commandeth."

And Amos went on to repeat the commands of God in their ears. Day after day he went fearlessly up and down the land crying out against the sins of selfishness and greed, and pleading with the people to repent and return unto the Lord, until the news of him went throughout all the country.

At last, Amaziah, one of the false prophets who gave out prophecies in return for money, came out publicly against Amos and demanded: "Go back home where you belong, Amos, and earn your bread by being a prophet in the hills. Keep silence here in Bethel, it is the place of the national capital; you have no business here."

But Amos told Amaziah that he would stay right there and continue to prophesy where God had sent him, and that, moreover, he would not sell his prophecies for money as Amaziah was in the habit of doing; for Amos was no more afraid of Amaziah than he had been of the courtiers in Samaria. Amaziah slunk away silenced before Amos.

Amos warned the people that they would be taken captive by a heathen enemy unless they turned away from the evil of their ways. He said if they kept on spending their days in feasting and their nights in drinking and dancing, and lolled about on soft couches most of the time, that they would have no strength left to fight with, and the enemy would come down upon them unawares and capture them easily.

Now, Amos knew that the enemies of Israel were watching from afar, and he had learned that there were plans on foot for an attack to be made upon them, but in spite of everything he did and said to warn them they paid no more attention to him than if he had not spoken.

At last Amos blazed out at them and told them they were trying to take advantage of God. They knew that God had watched over and protected them in the past and they thought they were specially set apart to receive favors from God and that nothing could harm them. Then he told them that God judged every man on his own record, and that if they disobeyed God they would as surely suffer as if they had never received blessings at his hands, and he told them also that they deserved to suffer more because they knew better.

But they laughed him to scorn and refused to follow his advice, and went on living in luxury and ease. However, they lived to regret it, for God punished the people for their wickedness.

STUDY TOPICS

1. What was the occupation of Amos? Describe the various things he had to do in carrying on his work.
2. Describe some of the pictures that came into the mind of Amos as he was walking home from Jerusalem.
3. Locate on the map Jerusalem; Tekoa; other towns and cities which Amos may have visited.
4. What wrongs had Amos seen inflicted on the poor and helpless? How did he feel toward the oppressed?
5. How did Amos come to drop the life of a shepherd and become a prophet?
6. What were the accusations that Amos brought against the Israelites?
7. Are you willing to take this pledge?—"I will be a good American and a good citizen of my town or community. I will do all I can to make it clean and healthful and beautiful. I will be kind and fair and generous to all and take advantage of none."
8. If you are willing to make this pledge your own, study it until you can write it correctly without looking at it. Then print or write it and put it where you can see it every day.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE LION-HEARTED PROPHET

"I HAVE appointed thee a prophet unto the nations."

The young man listened to the voice of the Lord and his heart was filled with wonder and awe. All his life he had wanted to be what the voice of the Lord now appointed him; he desired above all things else to be a prophet of God.

He had proved this by sticking to his purpose all of his boyhood. The boys among whom he had been reared had not understood how he could choose such a life, and he had been the target for much sport at their hands because of it. Sometimes he had been lonely for this very reason, and he had been left out of some of the good times when he found it necessary to study if he was to reach his goal.

But finally he knew the history of his time as no other young man in the country, and his words had a ring of sincerity and truth which made people listen to him with respect and attention.

Jeremiah was twenty years old when the voice of God had called him to be a prophet. God himself had said, "I have given thee to be a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah was overcome with a sense of his youth and his lack of power, now that the desire

of his heart was granted, and he was timid enough to reply, "Alas! Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a very young man."

But the voice of the Lord encouraged him, when he heard, "Say not that thou art too young; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid, for I am with thee to strengthen thee."

Then the Lord touched Jeremiah's lips and said:

"Behold I have put my words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdom, to pluck up, and to break down, and to destroy, and to overthrow; to build, and to plant."

Jeremiah knew by this that he was to go forth fearlessly, fighting the evil in the world, and building up and strengthening the good, and he was not afraid to do anything if it were done in the name of the Lord God of hosts.

It was thus that Jeremiah entered upon a life marked by unfaltering courage, splendid daring, and unbroken faithfulness to his calling, and there was never another prophet just like him in the pages of history. From the very day that God chose him to be a prophet he felt that he must tell the truth about the lives of the people, whether it sounded pleasant in their ears or not, for so long as he was serving the Lord, he must serve in spirit and in truth.

In those days the people who had been so wonderfully led back to the Marked Trail by the guiding hand of God, were in danger of losing the way again. When they had been in bondage in Egypt it had been through no fault of their own, and God had heard their cry of distress and had delivered them. But many years had passed since then and the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the people who had followed Joshua into the Promised Land, where they lived in the midst of plenty, had drifted away from God, until at the time Jeremiah was called to be a prophet they were almost lost in idolatry and sin.

Jeremiah knew that if the people did not change their ways they would be taken captive by the heathen nations which surrounded them. So his mission as a prophet was to warn and to plead and to remind the chosen people of their debt of gratitude to God. He cried aloud against their sins and begged them to listen to the messages from God.

Only one with the courage of a lion and a heart burning with love for his nation would have dared to brave the dangers which faced Jeremiah. Many a time did he find comfort in remembering the words which God had spoken on the day when he was called to be a prophet, and God never failed him. "For I am with thee" rang in his ears in many a dark time. As he went before the courts of kings and in the midst of the great

throngs on the highways, or to the councils of the rulers, he spoke so wonderfully that the wicked feared the very sight of him, for they knew that he spoke the truth.

At last when he had pleaded in vain for years and the people went on in the ways of sin, Jeremiah gave out this awful prophecy, "For three and twenty years have I spoken unto you the words given to me by the Lord, but you have not hearkened to me, nor to any other prophet of the Lord God, therefore, thus saith the Lord, 'Because you have not heard my words, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, shall come against this land, and this nation shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.' "

The priests and the people were filled with rage when Jeremiah made this prophecy, and they seized him and said, "Thou shalt surely die for thy evil words."

Then they called together a council of the princes and the priests and the false prophets, who said just what the kings wanted them to say, and decided to try Jeremiah in a court. They held the court by the entrance of the house of the Lord. One after another rose and spoke against the prophet. "This man ought to be put to death for saying that the city will be destroyed and that the people will be carried away captive," they said.

When they had finished speaking Jeremiah rose to testify for himself. He said, "The Lord

sent me to prophesy against this city all the words that you have heard. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and the Lord will turn away the evil which he hath pronounced against you. As for me, behold I am in your power, do with me as you wish, but know you for certain, that if you put me to death you will surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city and upon the inhabitants thereof; for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."

Then the council decided that Jeremiah had done nothing deserving of death. He kept right on in the path of duty, although he knew that the false prophets and the priests who feared the rulers were lying in wait for him every time he spoke.

At last Jeremiah left Jerusalem and went down to live in the land of Benjamin, and one day as he was sitting in the gate of the city, by an awful mistake he was accused of being a traitor, and when Jeremiah tried to explain, the captain who had seized him insisted that he was on the side of the enemy, and dragged the prophet before the princes, who sentenced him to be cast into a dungeon. So the great Jeremiah was thrown into a dungeon and there he stayed until one day when the enemy pressed upon the king so sorely that the king felt he must ask counsel of Jeremiah, for he knew the man of God would tell the truth.

So Zedekiah, the king, sent for Jeremiah to be brought secretly into his presence that he might ask if there was any hope for the army to gain a victory. Jeremiah knew if he told Zedekiah something pleasant, whether it were true or not, that he would be set free; and he also knew if he told the plain truth that he would be sent back to his prison cell and probably be killed, but he was determined to speak the truth. So when Zedekiah asked, "Is there any word from the Lord?" Jeremiah answered boldly, "There is; for thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the enemy king of Babylon. Moreover, what have I done against you or against your servants, or against the people, that I should be put in prison? Where are your false prophets who said that the king of Babylon would *not* come up against you? I beg of you, O king, not to return me to this dungeon, or I shall die."

Zedekiah listened respectfully to Jeremiah, although the message which he brought was exactly what he did not want to hear, and he commanded that the prophet should be taken to the sentries' house and treated kindly and be given wholesome food to eat.

Here, in the sentries' house, Jeremiah continued to preach and to prophesy, urging the people to turn away from idols. News of his prophecies came to Zedekiah again, and the people demanded, "Let this man be put to death, for he makes the hearts of our soldiers weak by his

words." Zedekiah was weak enough to do anything that pleased the people, just so long as he was not held accountable for anything that happened to the prophet of God, so he told the people to take the matter into their own hands. They tied Jeremiah with cords and let him down into a cistern from which the water had been drawn, which had deep mire in the bottom; and the brave prophet sank in the mire. But it chanced that one of Zedekiah's colored servants found out about this, and he came right in before the king and cried: "O king, these men have done evil in all they have done to Jeremiah, the prophet, whom they have cast into the pit. He is about to die."

Zedekiah gave the servant permission to rescue the prophet, and commanded, "Take thirty men with you, and take up Jeremiah, the prophet, out of the dungeon before he dies."

So the servant went with the helpers, and they tied cloths together to make a rope, which they let down into the cistern. "Tie it under your arms!" they called down to him. Then they all pulled together and drew the exhausted prophet out of the cistern, and took him back to the sentries' house, where he was well cared for.

A little while after this the stealthy Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah to meet him secretly again, and the prophet came to the secret passage where the king was, to meet him.

"Tell me everything," urged Zedekiah; "keep nothing from me."

"If I should tell you all that I know," answered Jeremiah, "you would put me to death at once."

"As the Lord liveth," declared Zedekiah, "I will not put thee to death, neither will I deliver thee to the hand of thy enemies."

"If thou wilt surrender to the king of Babylon, while there is time," said Jeremiah, "thou shalt be mercifully treated and the city will not be destroyed with fire, and thy life and the lives of all thy family shall be spared; but if thou wilt not surrender, the city shall fall into the hands of the enemy; it shall be burned, and thou, thyself, shalt not escape."

"But I am afraid to surrender," said Zedekiah, "for I do not know what my own soldiers would do to me if they found out I was going to do it."

"Do not be afraid," urged Jeremiah, "for the sake of the women, and the children, and the helpless aged ones, listen to my counsel and surrender now. This is a warning sent to you from the Lord God."

But Zedekiah refused to take Jeremiah's advice. Every word which the prophet had foretold came to pass. The beautiful city of Jerusalem was captured and laid waste with fire. Zedekiah was taken into Babylon. The royal palace was razed to the ground, the walls were broken down, and the descendants of the children of Israel were carried away.

But even the king of Babylon had heard of the

fearlessness and sufferings of the prophet Jeremiah, and there in the country of the enemy, the man of God was kindly treated, for the king gave command to one of his captains, saying: "Take the prophet and look well to him, and see that no harm comes to him. Do for him whatever he asks."

So Jeremiah was taken to live in the house of his friend Gedaliah, who was left in charge of the king's affairs in his beloved city of Jerusalem, and there he lived, treated with the greatest respect near the royal palace.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Read that part of the story of Jeremiah told in Jeremiah 38. 1-13.
2. What did the voice of God call Jeremiah to do? Does God ever call men in these days to lead and warn others?
3. How did Jeremiah's people respond to his warning? What punishment did Jeremiah tell them would come upon them?
4. Tell the story of the trial of Jeremiah. How did he finally come to be cast into prison?
5. Tell the story of the attack on Jeremiah which ended in his being thrown into a cistern.
6. Did the prophecies which Jeremiah had made come true?
7. Write three things in Jeremiah's character which you would like to have in your own.

CHAPTER XXV

A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND JOY

THERE was once a boy who grew up during times of war. One of the most familiar sights of his childhood was the army going forth to battle. The return of the soldiers filled him with joy, for then it was that he heard the tales of the great battles, and he never grew tired of them. In this way he learned as much of the history of his people as he ever learned in school, for as he listened to the war stories he found out why the soldiers went to battle, what they hoped to gain if they were victorious, and what they had to lose if they were defeated. He knew the geography of the country as well as any other boy of his time, for he learned this also as he listened to the soldiers tell of boundary lines, and territory, and conquered regions. Besides all this, he had heard the great prophet Jeremiah telling what would come to pass, and how his nation should be carried away into another land. And the words of Jeremiah, the lion-hearted, had made a great impression upon this boy who in his heart was a hero-worshiper.

One day, while he was still a young man, the sad news came that ten thousand of the best

people of the nation, including the king and many of his trusted followers, were to be carried away into Babylon to serve the king Nebuchadrezzar.

Ezekiel himself as a youth of great ability was one of the number transported into Babylon. Nebuchadrezzar was by no means a tyrant. He treated his captives kindly, and gave them many privileges to keep them from being more unhappy than necessary. He set up a colony for them by the river Chebar, and put the craftsmen at work building the masonry on a canal. He permitted them to have their own little government, and they suffered none of the terrible hardships which the people in Egypt had suffered under the Pharaohs.

Ezekiel was appointed a watchman to go up and down among the people, keeping up their courage and speaking words of cheer in their ears.

He performed his duties faithfully, living in his own house by the river, with his very beautiful wife, whom he deeply loved. As the years went by, the young man developed into a poet, and by the time he was thirty years old his poetry was known and loved by all the captive Israelites in Babylon.

But one day as he walked by the river Chebar, on his way to cheer the workmen, he had a wonderful experience. He had a vision in the bright light of day, among the crowd of workmen. Perhaps his poet's power helped him to see the vision clearly, but, however that may be, he was the only

one who saw it. It seemed to Ezekiel that the heavens opened and he saw a throne of light shining like a sparkling sapphire. On the throne sat one in the likeness of a man, and around him glowed a light like amber. A circle of rainbow colors went around this band of amber, and the glory of the Lord shone from the midst of it. Ezekiel fell to the ground and buried his face in his hands. Then a voice came from the heavens saying, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee."

Then God gave Ezekiel the power to understand that he was chosen to be a prophet of the Lord, to go to the people with a message unlike any of the messages which had been delivered by the other prophets. While others had prophesied of warning and of doom, he was to prophesy of good days to come, and bring hope and cheer to the homesick and stricken captives.

Being a poet helped Ezekiel wonderfully to bring his messages in beautiful words. Even with Ezekiel, however, there were some who would not listen. They thought anything in the form of poetry was foolish, and they mocked at him, so they missed the comfort which came to those who understood and believed in dreams and hopes. For twelve years Ezekiel continued to prophesy that good times were ahead, and that God would give them prosperity in their own land in the years to come.

Then suddenly one day this strange cry was

EZEKIEL

(From Sargent's Frieze of the Prophets)

heard in their midst: "The beautiful city of Jerusalem is entirely destroyed. The great walls are broken down. The temple is laid in the dust. All the people have fled for their lives and we alone are left to tell the sad story. We have escaped with our lives at great peril, but the king and all the rest have been carried away by the enemy. Would that we had listened to the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah, then might we have fared as well as you who came into Babylon without resistance. You have food and to spare, and live in your own homes, and feel no oppression of the enemy. It is we who were led by the false counsels of Zedekiah who have suffered thus. Would that we had been chosen to come into Babylon with you!"

Fugitives from the city of Jerusalem had made their way to the colony by the river Chebar, where they had news they might find the captives from their native land. Through many weary days and lonely nights they had been traveling in their effort to reach there with their sad lament.

When the exiles by the river Chebar heard this sad story they sat down in despair. Through all the days that they had been working by the river, although they had been treated kindly by the king, they had been buoyed by the hope that one day they would return to the city of Jerusalem and take up life again in their native land. Now the beautiful city was destroyed and in the hands of the aliens, they never could realize their hopes.

Alas! if they never had turned away from God in the first place, if they never had left the Marked Trail, they would be living in their own beautiful country in peace and plenty! For the first time in all these years they understood how ungrateful and wicked they had been in turning away from the Lord. They sat down and wept and despair overcame them.

It was thus that Ezekiel found them when he came out to make his daily rounds among the workmen. He was filled with sorrow for them and he took the matter to God.

Then God gave Ezekiel a joyful message to the people, to put new hope into them and to strengthen them for the work which still lay ahead of them. God told Ezekiel to tell the people that he would deliver them from their captivity and bring them back to the beautiful city of Jerusalem, and that it should be restored to all its former beauty, and the walls should be rebuilt.

Ezekiel said: "Thus saith the Lord God:

"Behold I, myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the

water courses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, . . . and they shall lie down in a good fold. . . . I will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and I will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. . . . And I, the Lord, will be their God. . . . And I will make with them a covenant of peace, . . . and I will make them . . . a blessing; . . . there shall be showers of blessing. . . . And they shall know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, . . . and I am your God."

This time all the people believed in Ezekiel and listened to his words of hope and cheer, and from that time on, they looked to him to bring them courage and hope as they looked forward to that day when the Lord in his good time would make his promises come true. The pictures which Ezekiel made with his words helped them to see the good times coming and to believe that it would all come to pass. He pictured the new city, the new temple, the new walls, the new courts, and the new entrances, and they imagined themselves already there. So they were able to go on with the days which remained to them in Babylon. Ezekiel was given the name of the "Prophet of Hope," because he kept alive hope in the hearts of the people until their hopes were fulfilled.

STUDY TOPICS

1. Find on the map the country of Babylon

where the Israelites had been carried by King Nebuchadnezzar as Jeremiah had foretold.

2. Tell of the experiences which Ezekiel had and what he saw and heard in his vision.
3. Tell the story which the messengers brought of the destruction of Jerusalem. Why were the people so much oppressed when they heard what had happened to Jerusalem?
4. What was the message which God sent by Ezekiel to comfort them? Search out the part of this message you like best and memorize it.
5. Read these words from Longfellow's poem "The Builders" and tell what you think they mean:

"All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

"Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems like idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

"For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build."

CHAPTER XXVI

A PATRIOT IN THE VALLEY

Once there lived in the lower part of the city of Jerusalem a man whose home was called "The Valley of Vision." His name was Isaiah, and it was because he was a man of vision, that they called his home by this name. He had the power of finding the hidden meanings in daily events and of foretelling things that should come to pass.

Isaiah had a very happy home, and his splendid wife and two little boys were greatly beloved by him. His wife had the gift of vision, or understanding, also, and helped him much in his work among the people. His duties often took him away from home for long seasons, and he always rejoiced to get back to his family.

But he loved his nation even more than he loved his own ease and happiness, and if he was called to leave his family in carrying out the work to which God had appointed him he went cheerfully and willingly. He was a great preacher, and he preached such powerful sermons that the fame of his eloquence spread all through the country where he lived. He kept his eyes open to the beauties of nature, and observed all the things

that went on about him so closely that when he preached to this company or to that he could always use the illustration that would be fitted to their understanding. If he was among the vine-dressers, he would begin a sermon like this:

"Now I will sing a song of the vineyard"—and he would have their attention and interest from the start. Before he had finished that song of the vineyard, however, Isaiah might be likely to let them see a picture of themselves, for he would say, "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant."

Sometimes when he was preaching in the farming districts he would use words like these: "And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth his standing corn, and his arm reapeth the ears."

Or, if he were out among the shepherds, he would address them this way: "Like as the lion growleth and the young lion over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him," and they knew that he understood how many dangers a shepherd must encounter if he is to be a good shepherd and protect his sheep, and they would want to hear what else he had to say.

When he was in the cities and went to the factories he was not at a loss for an opening to his sermons. If he were among the potters he would say, "And he shall break it as a potter's vessel is broken"; and they had all had experience with breaking the precious articles which they molded,

THE MESSENGERS TO ISAIAH

either by accident, or on purpose to make them over because they needed correcting, and they would listen to see what kind of a sermon he would get out of that.

Once he went to a district where they had suffered through a terrible forest fire, and he made a sermon out of that chapter in their history. He said, "For wickedness burneth as the fire; it devoureth the briers and thorns: yea, it kindleth in the thickets in the forest, and they roll upward in thick clouds of smoke"—and the people never forgot the sermon which he preached on that text. If there came an earthquake or a whirlwind, or a thunderstorm, the man of vision could always find some hidden meaning in it all, and he would tell the people what he saw.

When Isaiah was a young man he had a vision much as Ezekiel had, but his vision came one day when he was in the temple, and that day God called him to be a prophet preacher. In writing about this experience in after years, Isaiah said: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. . . . And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go."

Thus did Isaiah become a prophet of the Lord. And it was for this reason that his duties called him away from his happy home so much of the time and that he was so tireless in his work. As he went to and fro among the people and learned

the innermost history of their lives his heart was consumed with a desire to bring comfort to the sorrowing, light to the darkened, and rest to the suffering. He loved little children; perhaps he loved them more dearly because he had two little boys in his own home, but he wanted the children to be happy, and the young men and maidens to be blessed. He had the same feeling toward his nation that a brother has toward the ones in his own family. He felt that what the people needed was a great-hearted brother who would understand their needs and minister to each one in the right way. While he longed to do this himself, he knew that he was not great enough to understand each one, however willing his heart might be. Then sometimes when he would come home with his soul stirred for the little children, he would look at his own children and wonder if one of them would ever grow up to be the great-hearted brother for whom the world had such need. He was always longing for a better day to come.

While this desire was warm in his heart God gave him a promise and a message to the world. God let Isaiah look into the years to come, and see that the One for whom he longed should come to the earth some day, and be a brother to the whole world. God told him that the helper should come as a little baby who would grow up among the people and understand them just as God himself understands every one on the earth.

Isaiah did not keep this good news to himself, but out of the fullness of his heart he sang it to the people, saying:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever.

"And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. I will trust, and not be afraid: For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people. Make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things."

After this Isaiah preached and sang and prophesied about the coming of the One who should bring peace and joy and comfort and salvation to the world. And he of whom Isaiah prophesied was Jesus, the Christ, who came to be Brother and Saviour to all the world.

A Prayer for To-day

Our heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou didst send thy prophet Isaiah on the earth so long ago to foretell the coming of the Prince of Peace, our own Brother and Friend! Help us to help thee in bringing all that Isaiah foretold to come to pass, we pray thee. May we not fail thee in bringing joy and gladness to others. May we willingly run on errands of mercy. May we be loving and kind and obedient at home. Help us to grow each day in the knowledge of how to please thee, as thy friends and helpers on earth. Thou hast need of messengers to-day as truly as in the days of Isaiah, and we would run on willing feet to serve thee. The world needs a Brother now just as it did in the days of thy prophet. Wilt thou use us as brothers to all who need love and sympathy and help within our reach. Amen.

Study Topics

1. The story of Isaiah is so interesting and long that it takes sixty-six chapters in the Bible to tell it all. Read the first 9 verses of Chapter 53, in which Isaiah is foretelling about the coming of Jesus, the Messiah, and what he would endure for us.
2. Find the part of the words of Isaiah quoted in the lesson which you like best (a sentence or two) and memorize them.
3. Make in your notebook a list of the prophets of God whom we have studied.

CHAPTER XXVII

A PROMISE FULFILLED

The world was at peace in those days. There was no sound of war or battle in the whole land. The captives in Babylon to whom Ezekiel had sung songs of hope had returned to the beautiful city of Jerusalem; the walls had been rebuilt and the wonderful temple restored. New generations had been born and years had passed. The people rested from their labors, and many waited for the promises made by Isaiah to come true. He had sung that a King should come to the earth whose reign should never cease, who should reign forever and ever. So the people looked for the coming of the King. They thought he would come in great glory and sit upon a throne and rule the world.

In the city of Jerusalem there lived a good man named Simeon who was continually looking for the King. He was a priest of the Lord, who ministered in the temple. He too had read and studied the words of Isaiah, the prophet, and he longed for the day to come when the King should appear. But Simeon had an unusual reason for expecting to see the King. God had told him that one day he would see the King, and recognize him, and that his work on earth would not be complete until this had come to pass.

Many different kinds of people came into the temple when Simeon conducted the services, and he was accustomed to seeing fishermen, traders, merchants, doctors, lawyers, tax-gatherers, kings, and camel-drivers in the congregations. As he looked over the faces of the men who came to the services he must have said to himself, "Would that I might see the face of the King among the worshipers to-day!"

Simeon had a good reason to feel that he would not be mistaken when he saw the King, for God had told him he would know by the feeling in his heart when the real King came. So he looked confidently at one face after the other, but he could not find the King. He grew older as he waited, but he never gave up hope, for he knew God's promises could not fail. Each time that he went into the temple his spirit was filled with new expectation, and his eyes searched eagerly for the One whom he desired to see above all others.

There was one woman who was a good friend to Simeon who never failed to be present at the temple services. She had the gift of prophecy, and could tell of things that would come to pass in the future. God had given her this power. She too expected the King, for she knew he would come some day. She and Simeon must have talked about this together, for she helped to keep the inside of the temple beautiful, and they must have spent many hours together.

Perhaps Simeon may have asked her, "When do you think he will come?"

"I do not know that," she may have answered. "But I am sure that he will come some day, for God has revealed this to me."

"If you see him first will you bring me word even if I am holding the temple services?"

"I will truly do so, but you must bring the news to me if *you* should see him first."

"What a glad day it would be if we should see him together!" Simeon would say. "I am growing so old now that I must lean upon my staff when I go up to the temple, but I know God will not take me hence, until I have looked upon his face."

"That is well said," Anna would reply. "Trust in God; he will bring it to pass."

Then Simeon would be strengthened in hope and courage because of the faith of his friend.

One day as the temple service was being held and Simeon was reading from the sacred scroll the words of the prophets, a little company of three was approaching Jerusalem. A strong man was leading a donkey on which sat a beautiful woman, holding a baby in her arms. How carefully the man picked out the way for the donkey! There must be no risk of his foot turning on a stone, or of his stumbling into a ditch. The man was guarding the woman and the child as he led the beast so carefully along the way. Perhaps they talked to one another as they traveled.

The woman may have said, "I am glad we are taking the little baby to-day. All the children of our kindred are taken to the temple when they are his age, and I would not fail to take him. You are kind to bring us so far, walking and leading the donkey while we ride."

And the man may have answered, "How glad I am to do all that I can to help, and since God has given the child to you you shall decide what is best for him always. We will stop in the court outside the temple and I will buy the offering for the baby. Two turtle doves are appointed for the offering for a little one such as he is."

"You are ever thoughtful and kind, and careful of the child and of me. The Lord shall reward you for your goodness," she may have replied.

Then the mother looked down in her baby's face and grew silent, for she was remembering all the wonderful things which had happened when he was born. She thought of how the shepherds came to Bethlehem, guided by the angels; of how the Wise Men came from afar, bringing rich gifts to him; of the song of the angels and the star in the sky; and her heart was stirred with the memories.

The donkey was brought to a standstill. They were outside the temple. The man went forward to buy the offering. He came back with the two turtle doves, and lifted the mother and the baby down from the donkey's back. Then they went

HEAD OF CHRIST
(Hofmann)

inside to present the baby to the priest for the blessing of the Lord to be given him in the temple.

Simeon was standing in his place by the altar. He had put down the roll of the Scripture and was waiting to see if there were any children to be presented in the temple that day. He saw the man coming down toward the altar, carrying two turtle doves, while a beautiful woman walked behind him carrying a little baby. They came down to the place where Simeon stood. The man laid the turtle doves on the altar, and the mother handed the baby to Simeon for his blessing.

Simeon took the little one in his arms and looked into his face. Then such a flood of joy rushed over Simeon that he was speechless for a moment. He pressed the baby against his heart, and then he began to sing aloud, so that all who were there might hear. He sang:

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart,
O Lord,
According to thy word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face
of all peoples;
A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and
the glory of thy people Israel."

Just then the friend of Simeon, even Anna the prophetess, entered the temple and she came and cast herself at the feet of the baby and worshiped him, for she knew the prophecy had come to pass.

Then Simeon blessed the baby and handed him back to his mother, and Mary and Joseph turned and left the temple carrying with them the King of Glory, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, who had come to the earth in the form of a little child.

The prophecy of Isaiah had been fulfilled. The Marked Trail was to be made more clear for each of us to follow.

Study Topics

1. Read in Luke 2. 22-32 the story of Mary and Joseph bringing the baby Jesus to the Temple for presentation to God.
2. Tell the story of Simeon and Anna the prophetess looking for the coming of the One whom Isaiah had foretold.
3. Read carefully several times this beautiful hymn by J. Edgar Park. See whether you can find who said "We would see Jesus," and on what occasion (in John).

We Would See Jesus

"We would see Jesus, lo! his star is shining
Above the stable while the angels sing;
There in a manger on the hay reclining,
Haste, let us lay our gifts before the King.

"We would see Jesus, Mary's Son most holy,
Light of the village life from day to day;
Shining revealed through every task most lowly,
The Christ of God, the Life, the Truth, the Way."

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CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PATH-FINDER

THOUSANDS of people traveled along the roads that led into Jerusalem. They were journeying to the temple to keep a holy anniversary. Ever since the days when God had delivered the Israelites from the hand of Pharaoh on the Passover night the descendants of those who had been delivered remembered to keep this time sacred by praising and thanking God for his mercies which never fail. The Marked Trail was crowded to overflowing. Men, women, and children thronged the roads on their way to worship God in the Holy City. There were many joyful meetings among relatives and friends who had not seen one another for a year, and the city of Jerusalem rang with happiness. The little children had to stay very close to their parents, to keep from being lost in the crowds, but the older boys and girls who could find their way back if they should get separated from their elders, ran about with greater freedom. The temple was the central place from which they found all their directions and to which they were sure to return if they got lost from their own company.

Jesus was in this great company. He had come

up with his mother and his earthly father, Joseph, to the feast of the Passover, and he knew all the history of the people, and why the feast was kept as a memorial. He had grown into a tall, strong, healthy boy, a favorite with all who knew him in the city of Nazareth, where he lived. He had been faithful to his studies, for he was filled with wisdom, and all the duties of the family which fell upon his shoulders had been well done. He pleased God in all his ways. He was twelve years old when Mary and Joseph brought him up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the Passover, and it was a wonderful experience for him.

At the close of the feast the friends and relatives said good-by, and started back home along the different roads. Some of the homeward-bound groups were very large, for all the people living in one district tried to travel together. Joseph and Mary were with the company which traveled toward Nazareth. After they had traveled a whole day's journey, they looked around in the company and discovered that Jesus was not with them. They had supposed he was somewhere with the other boys and had not looked for him until the end of the day. Back and forth through the company they went, searching for him, but no trace of him could be found. Then in great alarm they started back to Jerusalem to try to find him. It took them another day to get back to Jerusalem, and all along the way they looked for him but could not find him. When

they reached the city they looked in every place where a boy might have been. They went to the market place, they looked among the caravans, and went to the homes of their friends, but at the end of the day they still had not found him. The next morning they started to the temple as a last resort, thinking that he might have wandered back there in search of them. When they entered the temple a strange sight met their eyes. There among the learned doctors listening eagerly to all they had to say, and asking questions that amazed them at his knowledge, stood Jesus himself.

When his mother saw him she cried out, "Son, we have sought thee everywhere with anxious hearts." It seemed so natural to Jesus to be in the temple hearing about his heavenly Father and learning how to serve him that he was surprised that his mother had not known that he would be there as long as he could, and that he would forget everything else in the joy of learning more about his lifework, so he said, "Did you not think that I would be here in my Father's house?" He was sure his mother would understand better than anyone else why God's house would be the best place in the world to him.

But Mary was puzzled, and so was Joseph, and they realized that there was something very wonderful about him which only God could fully understand. But he turned around and left the beautiful temple and went home with them without a murmur, and continued to be a thoughtful,

obedient son, and a good friend, and faithful schoolboy.

Years afterward when his life had changed greatly and he had traveled much, he came back to Nazareth one day on a visit. He was over thirty years old at this time. He went into the church on the Sabbath Day, for this was his custom wherever he might be. He was a preacher now, and a great one, and here in the city where he had been brought up he was to conduct the service in the church that day. There was but one church in Nazareth at that time and all the people in the place came up to the service. The Scripture lesson for the day was in the book of Isaiah the prophet, and Jesus opened it and read:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Then he closed the book and sat down to preach, as was the custom in those days. As he preached the people listened in perfect amazement, and their eyes were fastened upon him, for he told them that the Scripture written by Isaiah had come true; that the one who was to do all these gracious things was living on the earth at that moment; that the one of whom Isaiah proph-

esied was the Son of God, and that he was the long-promised Messiah. The people would not believe him, for, although they marveled at all he said, they remembered that he had been brought up in that very town, in the house of Joseph, the carpenter, and they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

Jesus was filled with sadness because his own townspeople would not believe in him. But they were so filled with fury that they seized him and rushed him outside the city, meaning to throw him over the cliff and destroy him. They had not counted on his marvelous power, for he calmly parted himself from them and passed out of their very sight to another part of the Marked Trail, where he continued his work.

A Danger Sign in the Trail

"He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not."

Study Topics

1. Read the story in Luke 2. 42-52 of how Jesus and his parents went up to Jerusalem to the Passover and how Jesus remained behind in the temple.
2. The story of Jesus returning as a man to Nazareth and of the people rejecting him reminds us of certain words of Isaiah. What are they? Read the story of Jesus' return to Nazareth in Luke 4. 16-30.

3. What noted picture do you know of Jesus in the temple?
4. Recall the event in the history of the Israelites which was celebrated in the feast of the Passover.
5. We would see Jesus, on the mountain teaching,
   With all the listening people gathered round;
   While birds and flowers and sky above are preaching
   The blessedness which simple trust has found.
6. Write in your notebook verse 3 of "We Would See Jesus."

CHAPTER XXIX

PROOFS OF POWER

Peter, the apostle and friend of Jesus, lived in the city of Capernaum. On this day the people thronged outside of Peter's house until the yard was full of them. Inside there were as many as the house could hold. There was not even room to step between them. The lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the sick in mind as well as the sick in body were there. There were also in the company those who were well, but they had all come for the same purpose, and that was to see Jesus, who was staying in Peter's house. He had done so many wonderful works in the short time that he had been preaching and healing that the fame of his deeds had spread throughout the land. After he had cured a man of leprosy, the dread disease which no physician could cure, the people talked about him more than ever. He had put strength into a man's withered hand, and just a little while before this he had cured the mother of Peter's wife when she was dying of a fever. It was no wonder that the sick and the afflicted came to Peter's house in such numbers hoping to be helped by this good Brother of mankind.

Down the road toward Peter's house came four men carrying a helpless cripple on a mattress.

They were trying to get to Jesus with their suffering friend, trusting that Jesus would lay his hands upon him and heal him. But there was no chance for them to get in where Jesus was. The dooryard was blocked with the crowd and there was no way to let Jesus know that they were there. But the friends would not turn back. They were not willing to give up if there was the slightest chance of getting the man into Jesus' presence. One of them went around to the back of the house where the crowd had not spread, and returned with a plan to propose.

"If we could get up the steps on the outside of the house with him we could go out on the flat roof," he said.

"What good would it do us to get on the roof?" asked one of them. "We would be no nearer the Great Physician on the roof than we are out here."

"If you will follow my plan our friend will be right in front of Jesus," answered the man. "Are you willing to do as I say?"

"We will do anything you suggest," said the others, "if it gives our friend any hope of being cured."

"Come then," said the first man, "we will go up on the roof."

So at once the four strong men picked up the corners of the mattress and started for the steps. Slowly and carefully they carried him up until they were on the flat roof.

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THE LOAVES AND FISHES

"Now watch what I shall do," said the one who had thought up the plan, and he began lifting off the loose tiles that formed the roof. "We can take off enough of these tiles to make a hole through which we can let him down into the room below, and when we do that he will be right in front of Jesus."

"That is just the thing to do," agreed the others. "We will work fast so he will not get away before we can get our friend to him." And they went to work with a right good will, and in a short time they had made the hole large enough to let the man down.

Jesus was talking to the crowd and healing the sick when a sudden silence fell upon the company. Looking up, they saw a mattress descending through the air, being let down by the four corners from the roof above. On the mattress lay a helpless man, and four eager faces were looking down through a hole in the tile roof, as careful hands held the ropes tied to the four corners of the mattress. When the man reached the floor he was right in front of Jesus, as his friends had planned he should be.

When Jesus saw the helpless man at his feet, and realized all that had been done to get him there, he knew that the man and his four friends all had faith in his healing power. He turned to the man, but he did not say nor do what the men were expecting. He looked lovingly at the sufferer and said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven."

Before any one else could speak, some critics who had pushed their way in among the company to see if they could not find something that they could find fault with, said to themselves, because they did not dare to say it aloud, "Who has any right to forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus knew what they were thinking, even though they had said nothing aloud, so he turned from the helpless man and asked them: "Why do you reason this way in your hearts? Which is easier, to claim the power to forgive sins, or the power to cure palsy? But in order that you may know that I am able to forgive sins"—and he turned again to the sick man before him, "I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

Immediately the man arose and rolled up his mattress, and walked out well and strong. He passed through the company who had seen the whole thing, and walked away toward his home. The people were filled with amazement and awe and cried to one another, "We never saw anything like this before."

Then they believed that Jesus was filled with the spirit of God and that he had power to forgive sins.

We Would See Jesus

"We would see Jesus, in his work of healing,
At eventide before the sun was set;
Divine and human, in his deep revealing,
Of God and man in loving service met.

"We would see Jesus, in the early morning
Still as of old he calleth, 'Follow me':
Let us arise, all meaner service scorning,
Lord, we are thine, we give ourselves to thee!"
—J. Edgar Park.

Study Topics

1. The story of this lesson is told in Luke 5. 17-26 and in Mark 2. 1-12. Read it in one of these places.
2. In this lesson we find Jesus healing the sick. Make a list of other acts of kindness which you have learned that he performed at different times. Do you think we can serve him by doing similar acts of kindness or service?
3. Find in a geography or cyclopædia a picture of the kind of house in which Peter lived. How were the roofs made? How were the stairs built?
4. Write in your notebook verses 4 and 5 of the hymn "We Would See Jesus."

CHAPTER XXX

A LESSON FOR TRAIL FOLLOWERS

A MAN was traveling down the steep, rocky gorge that led from Jerusalem to Jericho. He had twenty-one miles to walk before he came to the city, and he was walking alone. This was a dangerous road where many a lonely traveler had been waylaid and beaten and robbed, and only the fearless tried the journey alone. There were little caves in the rocks where highway robbers hid and sprang upon the travelers unawares. The road was known throughout that region as a dangerous place.

Suddenly the traveler was thrown to the ground, and blows were rained upon him by strong hands. One stunning blow on his head, and he lay limp and unconscious by the road. In a little while all that he had with him had been stolen from him and he was left there to die alone. The traveler had fallen prey to the robbers.

By and by, along the road coming from the other direction, walked a priest. He had been to Jerusalem, performing the services which it was his duty to observe. As he came up the steep road he could see something lying on the side of the road ahead of him. He imagined at once what had happened, for he lived in Jericho and knew

all about the dangers from highwaymen. So he took care to go by on the other side of the road, where he could look the other way and not have to turn and help the man. Such dreadful sights as this made him too sad, he could not be troubled with them.

The priest had just passed out of sight when a lawyer came up the road. He too could see the helpless man lying by the road. He was used to finding out the reasons for things, so he went over to look at the man to find out what was the matter. When he saw how badly hurt he was the lawyer decided that he could not do anything for him and hurried along toward Jericho.

Some time after this a Samaritan came down that way riding on his donkey. When he saw the man lying by the road he jumped down from his beast and ran over to his side. One look at the man convinced the Samaritan that he was of a tribe which had no dealings with the Samaritans. There was no reason why he should be called upon to help a man of this nation, but the Samaritan never stopped to think of this. He took out the medicines which he carried with him and began to try to revive the unconscious victim of the robbers. He poured soothing oil on the gashes in his flesh and rubbed his forehead with wine to bring him back to life. Then he lifted the stranger in his arms and put him on his own donkey and led the animal until they came to the inn where the drivers of the caravans always stopped.

The proprietor came running out to see who his guests were.

"Take this man in," said the good Samaritan. "Put him to bed and take good care of him. I will pay the bill."

The Samaritan stayed all night himself and did everything he could for the man, but the next morning he was compelled to continue his journey.

Before he left, when he paid his own bill, he gave the innkeeper money enough to pay for the wounded man to be taken care of until he should be able to return home.

"Take good care of him," he said, "and if it costs more than this, I will pay you myself when I come back this way."

Jesus told a story like this to a group of men who were asking him questions about the way people ought to live to please God. A certain lawyer had asked Jesus this question, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus then said, "What does the law say about it?"

The lawyer was well-informed, so he answered promptly, "The law says, Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

Jesus said: "Your answer is right. If you do all this, you will live truly."

But the lawyer wanted to show off a little be-

fore the company, so he asked another question which he thought not even Jesus could answer. So he persisted, "And who is my neighbor?"

In those days there were certain groups of people who thought they were too righteous to associate with other people, and there were some whose ideas were not the same as those of the people who lived near them, and they scorned all those who did not agree with them about the law and the prophets. Some people actually shunned those who were of different nationality from their own, so the lawyer really had asked Jesus a very deep and searching question. Instead of answering it as they might have expected, Jesus told them the story of the good Samaritan. When he had finished the story he asked, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" And the lawyer answered, "He that showed mercy on him." Then Jesus gave this direction: "Go and do thou likewise."

STUDY TOPICS

1. Read the Bible story found in Luke 10. 25-37.
2. What was the "law" which Jesus referred to in his question to the lawyer?
3. Can you think of some ways in which we can "go and do likewise"?
4. Tell the story of the lawyer questioning Jesus.

5. Tell the story of the traveler who fell among thieves as Jesus told it to his hearers.
6. Imagine yourself the Samaritan. Write an account of your journey and your adventure.

CHAPTER XXXI

A HELPER OF THE PATH-FINDER

When Jesus did his great work on earth he needed friends and companions to help him, so he chose twelve men, who were to go with him as he journeyed. These men learned from Jesus by watching when he worked and listening when he taught, so that they might carry out his plans after he had gone.

The first one he chose was a man named Peter, a fisherman, who was mending nets with his brother Andrew one day when Jesus came by. Jesus came up to them and said, "Come with me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Immediately they left their nets and started after Jesus and became his helpers. They had many wonderful experiences with Jesus as they followed him, learning how to carry on his work in the world. They were with him when he preached the Sermon on the Mount. Andrew brought to Jesus the lad who had the loaves and fishes from which the five thousand were fed. These helpers saw Jesus heal the sick and restore sight to the blind and cast evil spirits out of men's hearts, and they had watched him take the lame by the hand and lift them up until they could

leap and run. There was nothing that was hid from them in all the wonderful works of the Master whom they followed.

Peter thought the greatest thing about Jesus was his power to forgive sins, and to help bad people become good and happy. Perhaps this was because Peter was hot-tempered and impulsive, and often did things himself for which he was sorry afterward, and he appreciated what it meant to be forgiven. Jesus needed to forgive Peter many times in the three years while they worked together, but he always did forgive freely.

One day when the twelve friends of Jesus were in a boat out on the sea, they looked out over the water and saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. Peter wanted to be sure that it was Jesus so he cried out, "Master, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water."

"Come," said Jesus, and Peter climbed right out of the boat and started walking on the water toward Jesus. But before he had gone very far, he began to be afraid, and he stopped looking at Jesus, and looked down at his own feet, and then he began to sink, and he cried out in terror, "Master, save me!"

And Jesus, standing calmly on the water, reached out his hand and caught Peter and said: "O what a little faith you had, Peter. Why did you doubt me?" Then Jesus held Peter's hand and they walked over to the boat together.

Peter was made up of two different feelings. One of these was courage; the other was fear.

Sometimes he was just as brave as a lion, and again he was afraid of things which could not even hurt him. But Jesus knew that Peter had it in him to be brave all the time, and he was sure the day would come when Peter would be a hero, and Jesus was not disappointed in his follower in the end, although it took him a long time to learn to be courageous always.

As the twelve friends lived with Jesus day by day they learned something about the courage and daring of their Master that surprised even them. He told them that there was only one way he could prove to the whole world how much he loved all people and that was to die to prove his love. He deliberately chose to suffer for the sake of all who needed him. No one has ever been able to understand all the reasons which Jesus had for showing such courage, or why that was the only way for him to prove that he was the Son of God, but that was what he did. Peter could not bear to think that Jesus was going to suffer, and he used to argue with Jesus about it and beg him not to let his enemies catch him; but when he talked like this Jesus would say, "You are a hindrance to me, Peter, for you are thinking as men think, while I am thinking the thoughts of God."

One day Jesus took Peter and James and John with him to the top of a high mountain where

there were no other people, and when they reached the top a wonderful light shone from Jesus' face, and his clothes became glistening white, and by his side on the mountain they saw Moses and Elijah standing.

When Peter saw this glorious sight he cried out, "Master, we are so thankful we are here! Let us put up three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah, and remain here always."

But almost before he finished speaking, a bright cloud spread above them and a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

When Peter and James and John heard the voice they knew that God was speaking, telling them that all Jesus did was right, even if they could not understand it, and they fell upon their faces in great fear. But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Rouse yourselves and have no fear."

When they looked up at him only Jesus was on the mountain and Moses and Elijah had gone back into heaven. Then Jesus turned and led the way down the mountain, and they all came back to their daily work.

One day just before the time when Jesus was going to give up his life to prove his love for the world, Peter was sitting in the courtyard of a palace. He was there because Jesus was inside the palace, being tried before his enemies on a

false charge. What came over Peter as he sat there no one ever will be able to understand, but he went back on Jesus. A maidservant came up to him and said, scornfully, "You too were with Jesus!" And Peter answered, "I do not know what you mean."

Then he went out and stood by the gate, and another girl came up to him and said, mockingly, "This man was with Jesus!" And Peter cried out, "I do not even know the man!"

Then he stood there moodily thinking, and a crowd of men came by and said, "Certainly you too are one of his company, for you use the same language as his."

And again Peter said, "I do not know the man."

Just then Jesus passed on his way out of the courtroom, and he looked over at Peter. All at once it swept over Peter how contemptible and cowardly he had been to deny being Jesus' friend, and he went off alone and wept aloud bitterly. But Jesus forgave him.

So Jesus died as he had told his friends he would, to prove his love for the whole world. But after he was put to death, the wonder of his power shone forth more than it had done in his life.

He was buried in a cave tomb, and a great stone was rolled before the door and sealed with a great seal. Then a guard was placed at the entrance to the tomb, to see that no one broke

the seal, for the enemies of Jesus were afraid that his friends would try to take his body away.

For three days Jesus had been buried in the tomb, when one morning early before it was light, Mary, who loved him so dearly, came down to the tomb to visit it. When she came there she found the stone rolled away and the tomb was empty, and the grave clothes which Jesus had worn, were rolled up lying there. Mary turned and ran as fast as she could, to find Peter and John, to tell them this strange news, and they came running as fast as they could, also, to find out if it was true. Peter went right into the tomb and there he saw the grave clothes lying, and Jesus' body was not there.

Mary waited outside, and as she stood there some one came up to her and asked, "Why are you standing here weeping? Whom do you seek?"

Mary thought he was the man who had charge of the grounds, and she said, "Sir, if you have carried the body of Jesus away from here tell me where you have laid him."

Then the one standing by her side called her by her own name. "Mary," he said.

She looked up in wonder, and there was Jesus standing by her. He had risen from the grave and was alive and well again.

That same evening Peter was in the house with the other friends of Jesus, and the doors were locked because they did not want anyone else to

come in. Suddenly Jesus appeared among them just as he had been before he was crucified.

"Peace be unto you," said he.

They were filled with wonder and joy to see him alive again. He told them that he depended upon them to carry on the work which he had begun in the world, for he was going back to heaven to be with his Father, and he ended by saying, "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."

A few days later Peter was with some of the other friends of Jesus fishing in the lake. They had been fishing all night long, but they had caught nothing and they were hungry and worn out and discouraged. Very early in the morning they looked toward the shore and saw Jesus standing there. He called to them using a name that showed how he loved them.

"Children," he called, "have you any food there?"

"No, Master," they answered.

"Throw out the net on the right-hand side," called Jesus, "and you will find fish." At once they threw out the net and caught so many fish that they had to pull all together to draw in the net.

When Peter saw Jesus standing on the shore he did not wait to catch any fish; he forgot all about being hungry. He sprang right out of the boat, and with his eyes fastened on Jesus made straight for the shore. When the others came in

they found that Jesus had laid a fire for them and they cooked the fish over the coals and ate breakfast, and Peter sat by Jesus and would not leave his side.

That morning Jesus asked Peter the same question three times. The question was this: "Peter, do you love me?"

Peter said, "Master, you are everything to me."

Then Jesus gave Peter a special piece of work to do in carrying out his work in the world, as a token that he believed that the brave side of Peter had conquered the weak side; and Jesus was not mistaken in Peter, for he never failed him again.

He became a man of iron courage, and dared everything for the sake of the Master whom he so dearly loved, and became one of the best whom Jesus trusted with the keeping of the Marked Trail.

A Beacon on the Trail in Memory of the Apostles

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Al-

mighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

STUDY TOPICS

1. How many helpers did Jesus choose to go with him as he worked? What were their names and their occupations? Write these down in a list.
2. Read Luke 21. 1-17.
3. Tell the story about Peter walking on the water.
4. Tell the story about the catch of fish.
5. How did Jesus tell Peter to prove his love for him? What did Jesus mean by "feed my lambs" and "feed my sheep"?

CHAPTER XXXII

ONE WHO PUT UP MANY SIGN POSTS

A MAN was traveling along the highroad that led to the city of Damascus. In the bag by his side were important papers, which gave him a right, in the eyes of the law, to do the things which he had set out to do. The man's name was Saul, and he was of the city of Tarsus. He was so prominent in Tarsus, where he was born, that the people were proud to have him called Saul of Tarsus. He had studied with the greatest teacher of those days, to whose school all the young men who were studying law desired to go. This teacher was named Gamaliel, and it was a recommendation of ability, for anyone to be able to say that he had been educated in the school of Gamaliel. Saul had been one of the most brilliant pupils in this school, and he not only knew the law of the times in which he lived, but he also knew the laws of his forefathers.

He had heard about a new religion which had sprung up in the country round about, in which men were following the teachings of one called Jesus, who had given his life for the sake of this religion. He had left some disciples to carry on his teachings, and they were going about the

country claiming that this Jesus was the Son of God. They were holding great meetings in which they were persuading other people to accept this religion which they taught.

All this made Saul of Tarsus very angry. He believed in God and in Moses and Elijah, and in the Ten Commandments, but he did not believe in this man Jesus Christ or in any of his disciples. He therefore decided to use all his influence to put a stop to this new teaching. The governor gave him written permission to put these people to death if he found any of them teaching the new doctrine. So Saul went about the land seizing upon the men and women who believed in Jesus, and who would not go back on their faith, putting some of them in prison and giving orders that others should be put to death.

On this day he was on his way to the city of Damascus to try to find some of the followers of Jesus, who had escaped from other cities and taken refuge there.

He was determined to arrest them and bring them back in chains to the city of Jerusalem, where they were to be imprisoned and persecuted. The papers which he carried in his bag were letters from the high priest, which gave him power to do this. As he walked along the road he was trying to think of all the different things he could do to these people to make them stop teaching about Jesus.

Suddenly Saul fell to the ground. He had

almost reached the city of Damascus, but he could go no farther. A voice was speaking to him which he had never heard before.

The voice said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

In wonder and awe Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?"

And the answer came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It hurts me when you do this. But rise, and go into the city and you will be told what to do now."

The men who were traveling with Saul stood dumb with amazement. They could hear the sound of a voice but they could not understand what the voice was saying, but they could see a dazzling light which shone around them. But Saul saw something in the midst of this light which they could not see; Saul had a vision of heaven, in which he saw Jesus Christ himself.

Saul rose from the ground, but he was so blinded by the dazzling vision that he could not see at all. His companions had to take him by the hand and lead him into the city. They took him to the house of a man named Judas, who lived in the street called Straight, and there they left him.

For two days Saul was blind, and he would neither eat nor drink, but he prayed constantly. On the third day a man whom he had never known before, who was a follower of the teachings of Jesus, came to the house of Judas and asked to

PAUL AT MILETUS

see Saul of Tarsus. When he came into the room where Saul was he said, "Saul, brother Saul, even Jesus who appeared to you on your journey, has sent me to restore your sight, that you may be filled with faith in him."

Instantly Saul could see again, and he ate and drank and was filled with renewed strength.

What a change came over this man! He had come down to Damascus to capture those who believed in Jesus, but instead of doing that he joined the company of disciples and began to preach about Jesus himself, with all the power he had.

People everywhere were amazed and said, "Is this the same man who threatened to wipe out all those who believed in Jesus, and who came here with letters from the high priest on purpose to carry them away?"

But Saul paid no attention to their comments and went right on preaching about Jesus. After awhile he came back to Jerusalem and went on to Tarsus, but from the day of his experience on the Damascus road he continued to be faithful to Jesus Christ.

He entered upon a life of such adventure by land and by sea, as no other man has ever had. No trial was too hard for him, no danger was too great for him to face with courage and calmness, no journey was too difficult for him to undertake for the sake of Jesus. Day and night he traveled, and preached and worked and

prayed and pleaded with people to believe in Jesus Christ.

He was shipwrecked and cast upon an island; he was put into prison; he was mobbed and beaten and locked in chains, but he never once gave up—nor took back anything he had said for Jesus. Such courage and bravery and unfailing loyalty make a story of thrilling interest.

His name was changed from Saul to Paul, and this must have made him glad, because his nature was changed as well. He came to be known as Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ.

He wrote many books after this and they made his name famous. In these books he told of his adventures, of his hairbreadth escapes, of his strange deliverance from prison, and of his experiences in the courts of kings, but he never grew tired of writing and telling about the wonderful day on the Damascus road, when Jesus spoke to him and changed his life.

He went on missionary journeys into the most dangerous places, and never complained of the hardships which he had to endure, and he remained true and steadfast to the end. Some of his finest books were written while he was in prison.

Once he was taken prisoner and brought before one ruler after another to be tried for teaching that Jesus' power was greater than that of any earthly ruler, and he told the story of his life so eloquently that one ruler after another refused to

pass judgment upon him. At last, at his own request, he was sent to Rome to be tried before the great Cæsar himself.

Finally on reaching Rome, Paul came before the leading men, for Cæsar was not there when he arrived. This gave him an opportunity to tell about Jesus, and he preached so wonderfully that they treated him very kindly, and gave him a house to live in, where he stayed for two years constantly preaching about Jesus and his work on earth.

Paul opened the Marked Trail to all the nations of the earth, in the name of the greatest of all Path-finders, Jesus Christ, and it is through his work that we have learned many lessons about the Right Way.

One of the Sign Posts which Paul Set in the Trail

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own,

is not provoked, taketh no account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: but now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even also as I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is LOVE.

—1 Cor. 13.

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